DISSENT

Ideology and Power Politics — RICHARD LOWENTHAL

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A HUMAN DOCUMENT

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(The Question of Kitsch: an Exchange of Letters)

AUTUMN 1958 — 75¢

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DISSENT, issued October 1, 1958, is published quarterly by Dissent Publishing Association, 509 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N.Y. Subscriptions: $3.00 for one year, $5.00 for two years; $2.50 for students for one year; foreign subscriptions, including Canada, add 50 cents. All payments from foreign countries must be made by U. S. money orders or checks payable in U. S. currency. Single copy: $.75. Bundle orders of three or more copies: 40¢ each. For information on newsstand and store distribution write to: Eastern News Co., 306 West 11th St., New York City.

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VOLUME V
NUMBER 4

AUTUMN 1958

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AMERICAN NOTEBOOK

Some Brief Comments On the Domestic Scene

A Significant Victory

Mike Harrington

After a decade of injustice, the Attorney General of the United States casually removed the Independent Socialist League from his List of Subversive Organizations a month or so ago. In announcing the decision, no reference was made to the merits of the case, and a few lame excuses were offered—the Attorney General, whose office had established the List, appointed the prosecutor and the trial judge, and who had acted as a court of appeal, suddenly discovered that his own "strict standards" of proof had not been met.

Thus a blow was struck at one of the basic instruments of the witch-hunt. The List, first made public by Tom Clark under the Truman Administration, has literally pervaded American life. It has been used to deprive people of jobs in defense industries, to keep them off radio and television, to subject them to harassment by the FBI, to punish them with various kinds of damaging discharges from the army after two years of satisfactory service, and on and on. The listed organizations were given no opportunity to hear the charges, much less to refute them in any kind of proceeding. The ISL—the only organization on the List to make the attempt—won a series of hearings, or examinations, only after years of effort. The hearings themselves, such as they were, were strung out over a period of years.

For some, listing is clearly permanent. One of the features of this madness is that defunct organizations are on the List. They are, as is obvious to everyone including the Attorney General, incapable of ever defending themselves, for they no longer exist. But these ghostly condemnations have real effect. The former members of the now defunct group are subject, for the rest of their lives, to all of the pressures and suspicions which listing involves. In Hollywood, for example, one of the World War II "Win the War" groups was placed on the List. Virtually every writer in the movie industry belonged to it; during the time of patriotic pro-Russian feeling even United States Senators associated with Soviet-American friendship committees. Since there is no longer any organization, those who wish to can pick and choose. They can hold prior membership against a man—or they can excuse it.

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IDEOLOGY AND POWER POLITICS

Richard Lowenthal

How far are the political decisions of the Soviet leaders influenced by their belief in an official ideology—and how far are they empirical responses to objective conflicts of interest, to real situations of power, which are only expressed in ideological terms for purposes or justification?

Any clear formulation of the question will show that the two extreme answers which seem *prima facie* conceivable—that the ideology provides a ready-made "book of rules" to be looked up in any situation, or that response to reality takes place without any reference to ideology—are both meaningless nonsense. A ready-made book of rules for any and every situation, an unvarying road-map to the goal of Communism which the Soviet leaders must predictably follow cannot possibly exist, both because the situations to be met by them are not sufficiently predictable, and because no government that behaved in so calculable a manner could conceivably retain power. But empirical "Realpolitik" without ideological preconceptions can exist as little as "empirical science" without categories and hypotheses based on theoretical speculation. Confronted with the same constellation of interests and pressures, the liberal statesman will in many cases choose a different course of action from the conservative—and the totalitarian Communist's choice will often be different from that of either.

Assuming, then, that the Soviet leaders' ideology *is* relevant to their conduct, the real problem remains to discover which are the actual operative elements in it, and in what way they affect policy decisions. Clearly it would be folly to expect that we could predict Soviet policy merely from an exegetic study of the Marxist-Leninist canon. Not only is it impossible for any group of practical politicians to base their decisions on an unvarying book of rules; there is any amount of historical evidence that the rules have been altered again and again *ex post* to suit the practical decisions. Moreover, there are vast parts of this ideological structure, such as the scholastic refinements of "dialectical materialism" or the labor theory of value, which in their nature are so remote from the practical matters to be decided that their intepretation cannot possibly affect policy decisions. They may be used in inner-party arguments to *justify* what has been decided on other grounds. But that is all.

NOTE: The above is a revised version of an article which appeared originally in *Problems of Communism.*

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I

How, then, are we to distinguish those elements of Soviet ideology which are *truly operative politically* from those which are merely traditional scholastic ballast, linked to them by the historical accident of the authorship of the Founding Fathers? The answer, I believe, is to be found by going back to the original Marxian meaning of the term "Ideology"—as a distorted reflection of social reality in the consciousness of men, used as an instrument of struggle. The fundamental, distinctive social reality of the Soviet Union is that it is ruled by the bureaucracy of a single, centralized and disciplined party, which wields a monopoly of political, economic and spiritual power and permits no independent groupings of any kind. I propose as a hypothesis that the operative parts of the ideology are those which are indispensable for maintaining and justifying this state of affairs: "Marxism-Leninism" matters in as much as it expresses, in an ideologically distorted form, the logic of one-party-rule.

There are a few interconnected ideological features which are common to *all* the totalitarian regimes of our century—whether of the nationalist-fascist or of the Communist variety. We may designate them as the elements of "chiliasm," of collective paranoia, and of the representative fiction. Each totalitarian regime justifies its power and its crimes by the certainty that its final victory will bring about the Millennium—whether defined as the final triumph of Communism or of the Master Race; and that it can only be achieved by an irreconcilable struggle against a single, omnipresent and multiform enemy —whether "Monopoly Capitalism" or "World Jewry"—of whom every particular opponent of the totalitarian power is but a manifestation. Each also claims to represent the true will of the people—the *volonté générale*—independent of whether the people actually support it, and argues that any sacrifice may be demanded from the individual and the group for the good of the people and the defeat of its devilish enemies.

The Communist version of these basic beliefs is superior to the Nazi version in one vital respect. Because the appeal of racialism is in its nature restricted to a small portion of humanity, the Nazi's goal of world domination could not possibly have been attained without a series of wars, preferably surprise attacks launched against isolated opponents. Because the appeal of Communism is directed to all mankind, it can be linked with the further doctrine of the "inevitable victory" of the rising forces of socialism over an imperialist enemy disintegrating under the impact of its own internal contradictions. This central ideological difference, and not merely the psychological difference between Hitler and the Soviet leaders, explains why the latter are convinced that history is on their side and have no need to risk the existence of their regime in an attempt to hasten its final triumph. They believe in violence, revolutionary and military, as one of the weapons of policy, but they do not believe in the inevitability of world war.

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But the Communist version of totalitarian ideology also suffers from some weaknesses and contradictions from which the Nazi and Fascist versions are free. In the first place, its vision of the Millennium has much more definitely utopian features—the classless society, the end of exploitation of man by man, the withering away of the state—which make awkward yardsticks for the real achievements of Communist states. Secondly, in a world where nationalism remains one of the strongest forces, its internationalist doctrine is bound to come into conflict with the interests of a major Communist power, or with the desire of smaller Communist states for autonomy. Thirdly, by rejecting the "Fuehrer principle" and claiming to be "democratic," Communist ideology makes the realities of party dictatorship and centralistic discipline more difficult to justify; yet because appeal to blind faith is not officially permitted, justification is needed in "rational" terms. It is precisely this continuous need for the pretense of rational argument—the awkward heritage of Communism's origin in revolutionary Western democracy—which has led to the far greater elaboration of its ideology compared to that of "irrationalist" right-wing totalitarianism, and gives its constant interpretation a so much greater importance in preserving the cohesion of the party regime. By the fiction of democracy and rationality, the morale of the party cadres has been made dependent on the appearance of ideological consistency.

THE RESULT OF THESE inherent weaknesses of Communist ideology is that the doctrines dealing with the "dictatorship of the proletariat," the party's role as a "vanguard" embodying the "true" class consciousness, "democratic centralism," "proletarian-internationalism" and the "leading role of the Soviet Union" become focal points of ideological crises and targets of "revisionist" attack whenever events reveal the underlying contradictions in a particularly striking way; yet these are the very doctrines which the regime cannot renounce because they are the basic rationalizations of its own desire for self-preservation.

We shall expect, then, that Communist ideology will have an effective influence on the policy decisions of the Soviet leaders when, and only when, it expresses the needs of self-preservation of the party regime. We shall moreover expect ideological changes and disputes within the Communist "camp" to offer us clues to the conflicts and crises—the "contradictions"—which are inseparable from the evolution of this, as of any other, type of society. The fruitful approach, in our view, consists neither in ignoring Communist ideology as an irrelevant disguise, nor in accepting it at its face value and treating it as a subject for exegesis, but in using it as an indicator of those specific drives and problems that spring from the specific structure of Soviet society—an enciphered continuous self-disclosure whose cipher can be broken by sociological analysis.

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II

Let us now apply this approach to the doctrine of the "two camps" in world affairs. This has not, of course, been invented by Zhdanov; the post-war situation with its alignment of the Communist and Western powers in two openly hostile politico-military blocs merely gave plausibility to a world image which was inherent in Leninism from the beginning, but attracted little attention in the non-Communist world while the Communist "camp" was just an isolated fortress with scattered outposts. Nor has the doctrine disappeared with the post-Stalin recognition of the importance of the uncommitted, ex-colonial nations and of the tactical value of incorporating them in a "peace zone"; it remains one of the basic ideas of the Moscow twelve-party declaration of last November, and one of the fundamental subjects of ideological disagreement between the Soviets and the Yugoslav Communists. The Yugoslavs can reject the doctrine because they admit the possibility of "roads to socialism" other than Communist party dictatorship—"reformist" roads for advanced industrial countries with parliamentary traditions, "national revolutionary" roads for ex-colonial countries; it follows that progress is no monopoly of Communist states, and that alliances have no ultimate ideological meaning. The Soviets still assert that while there can be different roads to Communist power, and different ways of using it in detail, there is no way of achieving socialism except by the "dictatorship of the proletariat exercised by its vanguard"; it follows that tactical agreements with semi-socialist neutrals are not different in kind from the wartime alliance with the Western "imperialists," or the pre-war pact with Hitler—maneuvers which are useful in dividing the forces of the "class enemy" but remain subordinate to the fundamental division of the world into the Communists versus The Rest.

In other words, the "two camps" doctrine is the Communist version of what we have called the element of "collective paranoia" in totalitarian ideology—its need for a single, all-embracing enemy who is assumed to pull the wires of every resistance to the party's power. The term "paranoia" is not used here, of course, in an attempt to explain the phenomenon in question as due to psychotic processes in either the leaders or the mass following of totalitarian parties, but merely to describe by a convenient psychological analogy the ideological mechanism of projection which ascribes the regime's drive for unlimited power to an imagined all-enemy. The essential point is that in the nature of totalitarianism, any independent force—both inside and outside the state—is regarded as ultimately hostile: the concept of "two camps" and that of "unlimited aims" are two sides of the same phenomenon.

The question is, of course, legitimate where this doctrine impinges on actual Soviet foreign policy, given the undoubted facts that actual Soviet aims, and the risks incurred in their pursuit, are limited at any given moment, that the Soviets are perfectly capable of concluding

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"temporary" alliances with "bourgeois," "imperialist," or even "fascist" states, and that most other alliances in this impermanent world are proving to be "temporary" as well, for quite non-ideological reasons. I should suggest that the difference manifested itself in the peculiar suspicion with which the Soviets treated their "imperialist" allies even at the height of the war, and particularly sought to isolate them from their own population; in the manner in which they sought to create additional "guarantees" for the reliability of those allies by the use of local Communist parties wherever this was possible; and above all in the difference between the traditional and the Communist concepts of "spheres of influence" as illuminated by the different interpretations of the Yalta agreements.

THE PECULIAR FORMS taken by Soviet suspicion of their wartime allies are too well known to need elaboration here; but it is less generally realized that they are only the reverse side of Soviet determination to "strengthen" such temporary alliances if possible by the use of party ties. This is not, of course, a *conditio sine qua non,* as is shown by the examples of Russo-Turkish cooperation after the First World War, of the Stalin-Hitler pact and perhaps also by present Soviet cooperation with Egypt. But wherever Communist parties were tolerated by the partner, Soviet foreign policy has assigned them a vital role.

In the twenties, Stalin's Chinese policy was openly run in double harness; diplomatic support for the Nationalist advance to the North was supplemented by the agreement on the Chinese Communist Party's affiliation to the Kuomintang, enabling them to occupy influential political and military positions—an attempt no less serious for its ultimate total failure in 1927. In the thirties, a variant of the same "dual policy" was developed in the combination of Soviet support for the League and "collective security" with the Popular Front policies in France and Spain, in which the economic and social demands of the Communists were soft-pedalled for the sake of influencing government foreign policy; in the Spanish case the Communists, aided by the Republicans' dependence on Soviet supplies, ended in virtual control of the Republic on the eve of its final collapse. Again during World War II, Communists in the resistance movements and in the free Western countries were advised to practice the same combination of social moderation with the occupation of key positions as in China in the twenties and in Spain in the thirties, while military and political cooperation between "Soviet China" and Chiang Kai-shek was urged in the same spirit with considerable success. All these are the foreign policy methods of a state *sui generis*—a one-party state enabled by its ideology to make use of a disciplined international movement organized for the struggle for power.

The crucial example to illustrate the role of ideology in Soviet foreign policy, however, remains the history of the post-war division of Europe. I am not here concerned with the political controversy on

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whether this division, as first laid down in the wartime agreements at Teheran and Yalta, was inevitable in the light of the military situation as seen at the time, or whether the Western statesmen committed an avoidable mistake of disastrous dimensions. What matters in our context is the different meaning attached by the Western and Communist leaders, in concluding these agreements, to the concept of "spheres of influence," and the consequences of this "misunderstanding." That Great Powers are in a position to exert a measure of influence over their smaller neighbours, and that they use this influence in one way or another to increase as far as possible their security against attack by other Great Powers, is an experience general in the politics of sovereign states and unlikely to be superseded by any amount of declamation about "equality of rights"; hence the fact that the wartime allies, in drawing a military line of demarcation from North to South across the center of Europe, should have tried to agree about their post-war spheres of influence is by itself proof of realistic foresight rather than of a morally reprehensible cynicism. But while to President Roosevelt and Mr. Churchill these spheres of influence meant what they had traditionally meant in the relations of sovereign states—a gradual shading over from the influence of one power or group of powers to that of the others, which might even be loosely (and somewhat lightheartedly) described in terms of "percentages of influence," ranging from 50/50 to 90/10, they meant something completely different to the Soviets in the framework of their ideology—the ideology of the single-party state. To them, there could be no securely "friendly" government except a government run by a Communist party under their discipline; no "sphere of influence" but a sphere of Communist rule; no satisfactory percentage short of 100. Hence the consistent Soviet effort, beginning even before the end of the European war, to impose total control by Communist parties in every country on their side of the demarcation line—an effort that was abandoned only in Finland and Eastern Austria but was finally successful everywhere else; hence also the indignant protests of the Western powers that the Soviets had broken the agreements on free elections and democratic development, and the equally indignant Soviet retort that they were only installing "friendly governments" as agreed, that theirs was the truly "democratic" system, and that they had kept scrupulously to the essential agreement on the military demarcation line.

A large section of Western opinion has concluded from this experience that agreements with the Soviets are useless in principle, because "you cannot trust them." In fact, an interpretation of the experience which overlooks that the Soviets have, for reasons of national self-interest, kept to the "self-enforcing" agreement on the demarcation line would be as seriously one-sided as one which overlooks that they have, for reasons of ideology or party interest, broken every agreement on "percentages" and free elections. Yet there is no need to base future policy on either of two one-sided views, equally refuted by ex-

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perience. Nobody in the Western world has argued more powerfully against the "moralizing" approach to foreign policy and for a return to the give and take of diplomacy based on real interests than George Kennan; yet in his recent Reith lectures as before, he insists that the specific ideological distortion of the Soviet leaders' image of the world, so far from being magically cured by such a return to diplomacy, has to be taken into account in judging which kind of agreements are possible and which are not. After all, the peoples of Eastern Europe are still paying for the illusion of Western statesmen that the Soviet Union was a state like any other, pursuing its power interests without regard to ideology.

III

If we now turn to inter-state and inter-party relations *within* the Communist camp, we seem at first sight to have entered an area where ideology is adapted quite unceremoniously to the changing requirements of practical politics. Lenin, having barely seized power in Russia and looking forward to an early spreading of Communist revolution, could talk airily enough about the sovereign equality and fraternal solidarity of sovereign "socialist" states. Stalin, having determined after the failure of short-term revolutionary hopes to concentarte on "socialism in a single country," came to regard international Communism as a mere tool of Soviet power, and to believe that revolutionary victories without the backing of Soviet arms were neither possible nor desirable; he wanted no sovereign Communist allies, only satellites, and he got them in post-war Eastern Europe. The independent victories of the Yugoslav Communists at the end of the war and of the Chinese Communists in 1949 nevertheless posed the problem he had sought to avoid and thus required a revision of policy and ideology; but, so the argument would run, the stubborn old man had lost the necessary flexibility, precipitated a needless quarrel with the Yugoslavs and generally prevented the necessary adjustment while he lived. His heirs, however, hastened to correct his mistakes and to put inter-Communist relations back on a basis of sovereign equality and diplomatic give-and-take, not only for China and Yugoslavia but, after some trial and error, for all Communist states—or did they?

In the above "commonsense" account, not only the facts of the final phase are wrong; by deliberately neglecting the ideological aspect, we have lost sight of all the real difficulties and contradictions which remain inherent in the situation. Because the Soviet Union is both a Great Power and a Single-Party-State tied to an international ideology, it cannot be content either to oppress and exploit other Communist states or to come to terms with them on a basis of expediency; it must at the same time ensure the ideological unity of the Communist "camp" and its own authority as its center. Stalin's insistence on making the "leading role of the Soviet Union" an article of the international creed expressed not just the idiosyncrasies of a power-mad tyrant but

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his perception of one side of the dilemma—the risk that a recognition of the sovereign equality of other Communist states might loosen the solidarity of the "camp" in its dealings with the non-Communist world, and weaken the ideological authority of the Russian party leaders with ultimate repercussions on their position in the Soviet Union itself. His successors disavowed him because his Yugoslav policy had failed, and because they perceived the other side of the dilemma—that rigid insistence on Soviet hegemony might break up the unity of the "camp" even more quickly, and might in particular lead to open conflict with China. But by going to Peking and Belgrade and admitting the "mistakes" of Stalin's "Great Russian Chauvinism" (as well as the "mistakes" of his internal terrorist régime), they precipitated the very crisis of authority which he had feared.

Even Khrushchev and his associates, however, never intended to grant effective sovereign equality to the Communist satellite regimes of Eastern Europe which in contrast to Yugoslavia and China had come about exclusively by the pressure of Soviet power; they merely had planned to make the satellite regimes more viable by reducing Soviet economic exploitation and detailed administrative interference while maintaining full policy control. In the one case in which, not full sovereignty, but at least effective internal autonomy was in fact granted—the case of Poland—this happened against the wish of the Soviet leaders as a result of open local defiance in a critical international situation; to say that the other East European participants in the Moscow 12-party meeting of last November, or for that matter the participants from Outer Mongolia and North Korea, represented "governments of sovereign countries" would be to mistake the fancies of Communist propaganda for political facts.

The real purpose of that conference was to use the spectacular successes of the Soviet Union as a military and economic power in order to restore the damaged, but still indispensable ideological authority of its leaders in international Communism. The principle of "proletarian internationalism"—i.e. unity in foreign policy—had been recognized by all participants, including for the first time in many years the Yugoslavs, before the conference started; now both subordination to Soviet leadership and the need for doctrinal unity—a joint struggle against "revisionism" on the basis of common principles— were to be accepted and the heresy of "polycentrism," i.e. of a plurality of truly autonomous Communist movements, to be buried once for all. In the end, the Yugoslovs refused both, while the Polish Communists accepted only with mental reservations, insisting in practice on their right to decide themselves on the application of the "common principles" in their country. But as opposed to this partial failure, there was the success of full acceptance of the new dispensation by the Chinese Communists as well as the satellites, and the setting up of a new, elaborate international liaison machinery within the secretariat of the

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Soviet Communist Central Committee as the effective bearer of the renewed claim to international authority.

The partial failure, therefore, did not indicate that the Soviets would be content with less than they had demanded, but that the conflict continued. We know today that the Yugoslav leaders were warned by Khrushchev at the time that if they persisted in their refusal to join the "camp"—i.e., to make their support of Soviet policy a matter of unconditional discipline instead of free and revocable choice—they would be attacked. Their new program with its ideological justification for maintaining bloc-free independence received its final form in anticipation of that attack, and there is no need to ascribe the renewed public clash which followed its publication to the mysterious machinations of Khrushchev's alleged inner-party rivals or to any other hypothetical factors: the clash became inevitable because continued Yugoslav independence could only be justified with arguments which, once admitted as legitimate by the Soviets, would have entitled every satellite party to follow the "revisionist" road of Imre Nagy towards autonomy and neutrality—or, in Bolshevik language, to "treason."

In fact, the Soviet campaign against the international danger of "revisionist" disruption was steadily stepped up—and copiously illustrated by the warning example of Nagy—in the months which preceded the new break with Yugoslavia and the execution of the former Hungarian premier, parallel with the efforts to undermine the autonomy of Gomulka's Polish leadership and to break their resistance to a revival of the Cominform under a new name. By forcing Gomulka to condemn the Yugoslav heresy, to defend the execution of Nagy as an "internal Hungarian affair," and to consent to the publication of a Polish edition of a new policy-making international magazine edited by a Russian, Khrushchev has come close to the objective required by the logic of his one-party regime: the restoration of Soviet authority in international Communism as a precondition for unity in both foreign policy and ideological principles, based on some of the very doctrines he rashly threw overboard in 1953/6.

IV

Ultimately, the need to fight "revisionism" in Eastern Europe, even at the price of renewed difficulties with both Yugoslavia and Poland, arises from the need to strengthen the ideological defenses of the party regime in Russia itself. To admit that in Hungary the workers rose against a Communist government would call into question the basic identification between the ruling party and the working class—the fiction of the "dictatorship of the proletariat." To let Yugoslav propaganda for "workers' management" pass unchallenged would confirm the implication that Soviet factories, having no workers' councils with similar rights, are managed not in the interests of the workers but of of the privileged bureaucracy. To keep silent when the Poles proudly report the improvement of their agricultural yields since the dissolution

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of most of their collective farms would encourage Soviet peasants to dream of similar reforms. To put up with the freedom of artistic, literary and philosophical discussion in Poland and Yugoslavia would strengthen the demands of Soviet writers and scholars for similar freedom....

But though aggravated by the impact of the temporary reconciliation with Yugoslavia and the near-revolutionary changes in Poland, the pressure for reform exists in Russia itself. It would thus be wrong to conclude this account without trying to indicate, however sketchily, how ideological changes can be used as aids in interpreting this process.

Earlier, we mentioned some of the basic tenets which seem inseparably bound up with the preservation and justification of a Communist one-party régime. But within this unchanging framework, considerable variations in detail have taken place in the history of the Soviet Union. The appearance or disappearance of one of these "ideological variables" may be a valuable indicator of the kind of pressures which are being exerted on the regime by the growth of Soviet society, and of the manner in which the leaders are trying to maintain control—now by partly giving in to these pressures and seeking to canalize them, now by a sharp frontal counter-attack.

Among the most revealing of these variables are Soviet doctrines about the economic role of the state, and about the "class struggle" within Soviet society. The underlying reality is that a revolutionary party dictatorship, once it has carried out its original program and by this has contributed to the emergence of a new privileged class, is bound to disappear sooner or later—to fall victim to a "Thermidor"—unless it prevents the new upper class from consolidating its position by periodically shaking up the social structure again and again in a "permanent revolution from above." The ideological expression of this problem, according to classical Leninist doctrine, is that the "dictatorship of the proletariat" should gradually "wither away" after it has succeeded in destroying the old ruling classes; if continued dictatorship is to be justified, new goals of social transformation must be set and new "enemies" discovered.

IN THE EARLY PERIOD of Stalin's rule, this was done by the forced collectivization of the Russian countryside; the prosperous peasants—the "kulaks"—took the place of the former landowners and capitalists as the "enemy class" that had to be liquidated. Summing up the achievement in 1937, Stalin wrote in his "Short Course" of party history that collectivization had been a second revolution, but a revolution carried out from above, by state power, "with the help of the masses," not just by the masses from below. The ideological groundwork was thus laid for assigning to the state a function of continuous economic transformation from above, not just a once for-all revolutionary function.

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The second step, also taken by Stalin in 1937, at the height of the great blood purge, consisted in proclaiming the doctrine that the "class struggle" in the Soviet Union was getting more acute as the "construction of socialism" advanced, because the "enemies" were getting more desperate. This was the ideological justification of the purge itself and the veiled indication that it amounted to yet another revolution from above, though Stalin refrained this time from trying to define the "enemies" in social terms. In fact, what was going on was both a mass liquidation of the bearers of the party's older revolutionary tradition, considered unsuited to the tasks of a bureaucratic state party, and of the most confident and independent-minded elements of the new privileged bureaucracy, culminating in the transformation of the party's social and ideological composition by the mass incorporation of the surviving frightened bureaucrats. Stalin's final ideological pronouncement, contained in his last pamphlet on "Economic Problems of Socialism," consisted in mapping out a program for further revolutionary transformation of Soviet society, with the taking over of kolkhoz property by the state as its central element.

THE FIRST MAJOR BREACH in these Stalinist ideological innovations was made by Khrushchev in his "secret speech" at the 20th Congress. Apart from his factual disclosures about Stalin's crimes, he denounced Stalin's doctrine of sharpening of the class struggle with the advance of Socialist construction as dangerous nonsense, calculated to lead to the mutual slaughter of loyal Communists after the real class enemy had long been liquidated. By this, Khrushchev gave the master clue to the puzzle of the purpose of the speech: it was a "peace offering" to the leading strata of the regime, in party machine, army and management alike, a response to their pressure for greater personal security. But by this concession, Khrushchev reopened the problem which Stalin's practice and his doctrine had been intended to solve—that of preserving and justifying the party dictatorship by periodic major shake-ups of society.

By the spring and summer of 1917, Khrushchev showed his awareness of the practical side of the problem: his dismantling of the economic ministries, breaking up the central economic bureaucracy and strengthening the power of the regional party secretaries, was another such revolutionary shake-up. First he repeated, in his solemn speech on the 40th anniversary of the Bolshevik seizure of power, his rejection of Stalin's doctrine of the ever-sharpening class struggle and the ever-new enemies, thus indicating his wish to avoid a return to Stalin's terroristic methods even while following his social recipe of permanent revolution. Then, he proceeded to develop his own alternative justification for maintaining the party dictatorship—which consists in boldly identifying the strengthening of party control with the "withering away of the state" predicted by Lenin!

Reviving this formula for the first time since it was buried by

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Stalin, Khrushchev explained that the military and police apparatus of the state would have to be maintained while a hostile capitalist world existed outside; but he added that the economic and administrative functions of the state bureaucracy would henceforth be steadily reduced by decentralization and devolution, thus strengthening the organs of regional self government and of national autonomy within the various republics. At the same time, he quietly took steps to strengthen the control of the central party secretariat—his own seat of power—over the republican and regional party organs, thus following the old Leninist principle that the fiction of national autonomy in the Soviets must be balanced by the fact of centralized discipline within the ruling party.

Thus the same purpose of maintaining the social dynamism of the party dictatorship and justifying its necessity, which Stalin achieved by exalting the economic role of the state, is pursued by Khrushchev by means of the reverse device of claiming that the state's economic functions have begun to "wither away." On the face of it, this seems to reduce the role of ideology to that of ingenious trickery, obscuring rather than reflecting the underlying social realities. Yet in fact, the need for a change in the argument reflects a change in the underlying social situation—the resistance against a return to naked terrorism, the growing desire for a lessening of state pressure and a greater scope for local activity. *Whether in industry or agriculture, in the control of literature or in relations with the satellite states, the basic needs of the regime have remained the same—but they can no longer be assured in the same way.* That, too, is reflected in the variables of the official ideology.

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AMERICA! AMERICA!

Dwight Macdonald writes: *"America! America!" was written early this year as a New York letter to* Encounter. *The editors accepted it, then a month or so later rejected it, then almost immediately re-accepted it, and finally after another six weeks definitively rejected it. These shifts reflected the attitude of* Encounter's *"front office," the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Paris, which publishes the magazine with funds supplied by several American foundations. The people in Paris felt the Letter was exaggerated, one-sided, unfounded, and in bad taste, and they feared it might cause American foundations to cut off supplies. The editors did what they could—hence the shifting—but ultimately yielded. Perhaps they felt that Paris (and its moneyed foundations) was worth a mass. Or a mess. I'm sorry to feel obliged to make all this public, because I like* Encounter's *editors (and even its front-office Metternichs) and because I very much enjoyed the year I spent in London on* Encounter. *But I do feel obliged, because I think readers have a right to know when a magazine makes an editorial decision for extraneous reasons, especially this kind of reason. But I must also state that (a) the Paris office is not ordinarily consulted about manuscripts (mine apparently was shown to one of the Paris boys merely as a matter of interest—the editor thought he'd enjoy it!) and also that such intervention is extremely rare. I can recall no such pressure from Paris while I was there.*

Dwight Macdonald

When I came back to New York last fall, just in time for the Sputnik, after a year in London and two months in Tuscany, I felt I had crossed a boundary much wider than the Atlantic. We are an unhappy people (I felt), a people without style, without a sense of what is humanly satisfying. Our values are not anchored securely, not in the past (tradition) and not in the present (community). There is a terrible *shapelessness* about American life. These prosperous Americans look more tense and joyless than the people in the poorest quarters of Florence. Even the English seem to have more *joie de vivre*.

No nation in history has been richer or has had a more equal distribution of wealth, and since 1940 there has been a fantastic increase in the wealth and a considerable decrease in economic differences. If Socialism be the equal sharing of plenty, then we are far along the road. We have more of everything a human being can conceivably, and inconceivably, want than Fourier, Proudhon, or Marx could have imagined possible. According to *Fortune* (June, 1954), we spend over $30 billion a year on pleasure ("The Great Fun Market"): sports, travel, hunting

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and fishing, books and magazines, liquor, gardening, home workshops, movies and television, etc. Yet we are, I insist, not happy. Why not? Let me put down a few impressions.

(1) The British and the Italians know how to live together, we don't. Each does it differently, the British with all sorts of formal, moral, legalistic inhibitions against interfering with the "rights" of The Other; the Italians with a vivacious pleasure in the human otherness of The Other; but each people in its own way has very good manners. Our manners are either bad or non-existent, which is perhaps the same thing. (I'm referring to public, not private, manners; Americans are generous, kindly, and hospitable to people they've been introduced to, but their "street manners" are atrocious, as are the manners of those whose jobs bring them into constant contact with strangers—taxi-drivers, bus-conductors, sales clerks, waiters, policemen, porters, etc.). This is not as trivial as it might seem. When manners are defective, ego clashes nakedly against ego, the I collides with The Other, and the results are distressing and even catastrophic. In our frontier West, as every movie-goer knows, differences of opinion were settled with six-shooters.

(2) I think the lack of manners is connected with the sense of violence one has in this country. The Italians are excitable and passionate, they shout, curse, and gesture broadly; yet one feels far more secure, physically, in Italy than here. In a single recent issue of the New York *Times* there is a report of a twelve-year-old girl being raped in a Brooklyn public school by a fifteen-year-old fellow-student; of a traffic argument terminated by one driver shooting the other and then later killing himself; of two teen-age girls being stabbed in the back at noon outside a subway station by some teen-age boys who had tried to get money from them; of the principal of a city school who killed himself because he was being questioned by a Grand Jury about violent episodes among students (another rape, several assaults on teachers and one on a policeman *inside* the school).* It's true I live in New York, where there are many Negroes and Puerto Ricans whose crime rate, for understandable reasons, is exceptionally high. But there are lots of Irish, Italian, and even "good Anglo-Saxon" names in our daily crime reports. Nor is the hinterland exactly pacific. About the same time as the above, the Nebraska National Guard was called out to protect the people of Lincoln, the state capital, against a 19-year-old boy. Young Charles Starkweather killed eleven people in three days, for various reasons: because they disapproved of his "dating" their daughter, because they had cars or other possessions he wanted, or because they happened to be around. "Here was a totally defeated ego which had no satisfactory anchorage in social life," explained Dr. James Reinhardt of

* A friend who chances to have a thirteen-year-old girl cousin in this school says her response to the rape and the newspaper publicity was: "My, aren't we getting *popular!*" This is a very American reaction. Since the real community is too feeble to confer status, the individual looks to the synthetic mass-community of newspaper readers. Like the boy recently arrested for robbing a bank who said to his weeping mother, "Say, look at those headlines. Mom, I'm famous!"

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the University of Nebraska—no American crime story is complete without the psychologist's report. "Socially he was simply an empty man. The only way he could become important was by killing." Look, mom, I'm famous.

(3) The American landscape is lovely save where American man has touched it, and since by now he has touched it almost everywhere one is likely to go—and torn down the structures of earlier American men who had more sense of fitness—we live in ugliness. There is the great American roadside, lined with motels and diners and hot-dog stands, paved with the best quality concrete (and the worst quality intentions) that writhes through the land like a tapeworm. And there are the cities, vast deserts of the present that sometimes look spectacular from a distance, like the Grand Canyon—and are as pleasant to live in. By comparison, in London or in Tuscany one lives embedded in the past, a state of being I, personally, like.*

(4) *There:* a community, each person differentiated by status and function but each a part of an orderly social structure. *Here:* everybody "equal" in the sense that nobody respects anybody else unless he has to, by *force majeure;* the national motto should be not "E Pluribus Unum," not "In God We Trust," but: "I got mine and screw you, Jack!" (or better, "Brother"—"friend" and "brother" being used by Americans to express extreme hostility and contempt). *There:* continuity with the past, so that some level is taken for granted; there is a bottom, some things aren't done; the bottom may be broken through—as in the London mass newspapers—but at least there is a sense of something being violated. *Here:* no bottom, no continuity, no level; it's a jungle in which anything can happen without anybody's thinking it out of the ordinary. Each individual makes his own culture, his own morality, and sometimes very well—our individual saints and savants don't compare unfavorably with those abroad—but it's all on his lonesome. The same *tendencies* exist in Europe—the same destruction of the order of the past, physical and social, by the cancerous growth of mass society —but they are much less advanced. When one hears Europeans complaining about the Americanization of Europe, one wishes they could spend a few weeks over here and get a load of the real thing. Or rather a few years—most European tourists, except for Madame de Beauvoir, seem to like America. For them, the customs and the landscape are as strange as if it were Java or Tibet, and they find it all "stimulating" and "fascinating," as I dare say it is if you don't have to live here. The tourist's exotic is the native's poison.**

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* I have just returned (Sept. 15) from my first visit to Los Angeles, which is to New York, so far as attractiveness, sense of the past and human scale, as New York is to London.

** Friends have suggested that perhaps the same applies to me, that if I spent not one year but five in London my admiration for the British way of life might be considerably moderated. I doubt it; but in any case, I'm sure my criticism would be directed to quite different defects than the ones I'm conscious of over here. Different, and I think, less serious.

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(5) Our Cult of Youth. Old people bore us, and we send them to nice rest-homes if we can afford it. In London and Tuscany, where the idea of a community persists, the old are a normal part of life; they are considered interesting because they know about the past. But we think of them as has-beens, forgetting that what has been is sometimes better than what is and in any case is the root of what will be. Americans think of the ideal age as somewhere around twenty. In the next two decades, this will become crucial because both Old and Young will increase much faster than the rest of us. The teen-age population* will grow fantastically by some 70 per cent, because of the post-1945 war babies. The over-50 population will grow next fastest. So far, the social workers are worrying about the old folks, but everyone else is fascinated with the teen-agers.

(6) When we come into contact with other peoples, as our post-1945 imperial rôle has forced us to do—never has a world power taken up the insignia of *imperium* so reluctantly—we don't impress them. The British and the French weren't popular with their wards, but they weren't laughed at. Even the Soviet Russians, for all their ruthlessness, barely covered by the fig of ideology, seem to speak a more common language with other peoples than we do. I think the difference is that Americans appear to other nations to be somehow at once gross and sentimental, immature and tough, uncultivated and hypocritical, shrewd about small things and stupid about big things. In these antinomies fatally appears our lack of style. John Foster Dulles, the pious Artful Dodger, is our perfect prototype in world affairs. I remember what a London journalist, years ago, remarked to me, apropos Henry Luce's organization: "I can deal with gangsters or with Boy Scouts, but I must admit I'm at a loss with Boy Scouts who act like gangsters."

The point was illustrated during Mr. Nixon's recent agony in Latin America. On the one hand, Nixon getting himself chronically mobbed while attempting to spread "goodwill' and let's-talk-it-over-boys reason in those dark regions—"Don't you want to hear *facts?*" he cried desperately to the students of Lima amidst the jeers and stones. On the other hand, Eisenhower's instant explosion of anger when he learned of the violence in Caracas, and his instant reflex: send in the marines! "The President of the United States," spoke the Secretary of State to the Venezuelan ambassador, "expects the authorities in Venezuela to take every possible measure to protect the Vice-President. . . . And if there is any lack of will or capacity to give that, we would like to know about it quickly." Eisenhower expects every Venezuelan to do his duty by Nixon. This was backed up by airmailing four companies of marines and para-

* Our teen-agers in the last fifteen years have become a new social group, a pressure bloc like labor or the farmers, complete with their own sub-culture (rock-'n-roll, hot-rod cars, horror movies). They have been able to free themselves from parental control because they have their own money (our post-1940 prosperity means bigger allowances for teen-agers and also bigger earnings from spare-time jobs) and because the parents, like other ruling classes in history, have lost confidence in their right to rule—in this case because of progressive education and of Freudian theories.

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troopers to our military bases in the Caribbean, lest the Communists have trouble keeping green the memory of Haiti and Nicaragua. Thus a goodwill tour ended up with the marines. It was all very American. American in the notion that a big smile, a firm handshake, and a sincere willingness to Talk It Over will soothe the most savage breast—our old faith in democratic discussion and our new faith in public relations are combined here—and American in the quick resort to force when this naïve illusion collapses.

Eisenhower's handling of the Little Rock school integration crisis is curiously parallel, and not only because the 101st Airborne Division was involved both times. Racial integration is as explosive an issue in the South as anti-Yanquism is in Latin America, and with as deep roots; the Supreme Court since 1954 has been dealing with it admirably, with a combination of firmness and patience; but Eisenhower first tried to "talk it over" with Governor Faubus, a sort of goodwill tour of an intractable issue, and then, when Faubus, a demagogue with a perfect cause, expectably made trouble, at once went to the other extreme and sent in the troops. It has so far cost us over four million dollars to keep eight Negro children in Little Rock High School, nor does the wound show signs of healing. Indeed, the use of troops, objectionable in principle as a violation of states' rights (since other means of enforcing the law had by no means been exhausted), has inflamed and prolonged the infection. There are some issues that yield *neither* to the public-relations smile nor to the paratroopers. Most puzzling.

SINCE I'VE BEEN AWAY, the March of Progress has been progressing. Out of every ten American houses, eight (81 per cent) now have television sets, almost nine (87 per cent) have washing machines, and practically all (96 per cent) have electric refrigerators. Everybody but me has a new car. The Negro janitor of my apartment building has a bigger, sleeker one than I have ever been able to afford. I can't say I entirely envy him. The new cars are hideous beyond the imagination of a Dante (or a Steinberg), mobile juke-boxes that violate every principle of taste and functionalism, longer and lower and more insanely powerful than ever, lathered with chrome in fantastic zigs and zags and rhomboids, their behinds elongated and streamlined until one can't tell if they're coming or going, with upswept fins and quadruple tail-lights winking and gleaming like a moon-rocket about to take off. (Anal eroticism? Protecting the rear lest a certain backward country "catch up with and overtake" us in the March of Progress? Or both? A traveller back from New Guinea says the natives sum it up: "This fella Sputnik him bugger-up Uncle Sam.") We are contemptuous of Victorian taste, or used to be until we entered the fluorescent age, but what, oh what will they say about these cars in 2058, assuming there is a 2058? And what will they say, what do *we* say about a phenomenon like Mr. George Walker, vice-president and chief-of-styling at Ford Motors, as reported in *Time* of November 4 last:

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George Walker sits in an office fit for an Eastern potentate: a $50,000 production done in creamy-white and black with raw silk draperies, sumptuous leather couches, a jungle of tropical plants along one end, a bank of hi-fi, TV, refrigerators, and cabinets at the other. On the floor spreads a carpet of inch-thick black lambskin. Reported cost: $30,000. Says Walker happily: "Ain't it sexy!"

There, in command of an $11,500,000 red-brick styling center set in an expanse of playing fountains and shimmering pools, Style Boss Walker works at the head of a staff of 650 artists, draughtsmen, modellers, and engineers. Most are young (average age: 31); all have what automen call "gasoline in their veins." Says Walker: "You just got to love cars." . . .

"A stylist," says Walker, "has got to show style in his cars, in his home, his clothes, and his person." He even smells stylish, slathering on Faubergé cologne so liberally that it lingers on long after he leaves the room. He owns 40 pairs of shoes (at $60 a pair), 70 suits, once had Saks Fifth Avenue make up four "cocktail suits" (at $250 apiece) in white with blue braid, white with black braid. "I didn't wear them," grins George. "People might think I was eccentric." . . .

Says he, happily recounting what he considers his "finest moment" while on a vacation in Florida: "I was terrific. There I was in my white Continental, and I was wearing a pure-silk, pure-white, embroidered cowboy shirt and black gabardine trousers. Beside me was my jet black Great Dane, imported from Europe, named Dana von Krupp. You just can't do any better than that."

So, Mr. Walker. But the really awful thing is that the American people like what he and his 650 young artists produce.

THE MARCH OF LABOR has continued. For a long time now —in America this means about ten years—unionism has been part of the normal American Way of Life. While this is on the whole good, it also means that another disruptive force in our society—which I think could do with a little more disrupting—has been neutralized. . . . The average worker has now completed twelve years of schooling, that is he has gone through high school; as recently as 1940, it was only nine years. . . . One Leo Perlis, Director of Community Service Activities for the AFL-CIO (that such a post exists is a sign of labor's maturity, if not, indeed, its senility), has revealed that his department is about to train bar-tenders in social-work techniques. "Bar-tenders," he explained, "see more people with social problems than social workers do. Instead of just listening to a customer with a problem, these trained bar-tenders would be able to refer them to the proper community agency." . . . The Welfare and Retirement Fund of the United Mine Workers announces, for the year ended June 30, 1957, receipts of $157,000,000, of which $138,000,000 was spent on pensions ($100 a month), medical benefits (the UMW now has a string of ultra-modern hospitals and clinics that give its members better medical services than all but the wealthiest non-miners can afford), and payments to widows and orphans. When one remembers Ludlow, Harlan, and other mine-workers' battles in this century, one is again impressed by the phenomenon of John L. Lewis, the Winston Churchill of our labor movement, a leader of large, courageous, and retrograde views who in 1946 bullied

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the mine-owners into financing the Fund. "No pen can write, no tongue can tell, no vocabulary of language is large enough to express the many benefits that will come to the American coal-miner and his family through the establishment of the Welfare and Retirement Fund," Mr. Lewis observed at the time. Like Churchill, he exaggerated, but not much. . . . There has even developed a union of union organizers, the Field Representatives' Federation which for many months has been demanding from the AFL-CIO recognition as the collective-bargaining agent for its 225 organizers, as well as grievance procedures, a better pension plan, and higher dismissal pay. The employer has not only refused to bargain, but also has very nearly fired almost half of its organizers.* One report is that AFL-CIO is planning to initiate a million-dollar publicity campaign, financed in part with what it will save by cutting its organizing staff. The class struggle vaporizes into Public Relations.**

I ARRIVED IN LONDON in the summer of 1956 just as the reputation of Colin Wilson's *The Outsider* was swelling to its most majestic proportions, and I got back to New York just in time to witness the similar inflation of James Gould Cozzens' *By Love Possesesd,* which was unanimously praised by the critics and which was for months at the top of the fiction best-seller lists. Since I have analyzed at some length in the January *Commentary* both the novel and the nonsense written about it, I won't re-hash it all here. But it may be interesting to compare the two episodes.

In each case, a bad book not only became a best-seller—there's no news in *that,* after all—but became one because it was extravagantly praised by critics and journals that normally (or so one thought) were more discriminating. Furthermore, both books are ambitious efforts, not pot-boilers for the mass market but the work of serious writers laboring at their very highest bent. In fact, I think it was their seriousness, indeed their portentousness, that sold them; Max Beerbohm, for example, a far more original and vigorous thinker than either Mr. Wilson or Mr. Cozzens (not to dwell on his considerably greater talent as a writer) never had the kind of sales they have been enjoying. The reviewers have become so disoriented through constant exposure to pot-boilers that they assume almost automatically that any book which is clearly *not* written for the market is to be taken seriously. This, of

* I ran across one recently, a veteran New Dealer I have known and respected for years. He told me that the AFL-CIO disregarded seniority in cutting down its field staff, selecting for immediate discharge those who belonged to the union. Also that the most insistent on thus punishing members of the Field Workers' Federation were the "liberals," notably David Dubinsky and Walter Reuther. I asked him why. He shrugged. "They're so damned *virtuous.* With them, it's a noble cause, and we're betraying the workers when we organize."

** Stop press addendum: Today's (Sept. 18) paper reports that Ford Motors greeted UAW pickets during the six hours the great "strike" was on (it was settled with UAW gains and good feeling all around) with mobile canteens dispensing free coffee and cakes. The reception Reuther, Frankensten and other pickets got at Ford twenty years ago was rather different, one recalls.

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course, is not the case. It is perhaps the critic's most important job to discriminate between the true-good and the false-good, since the humbler practitioners of best-sellerdom are so easily distinguished that they don't threaten our standards. It is when you have a sincere and ambitious attempt (to create a new philosophy or to write a "big" novel) that the temptation to be a good fellow and applaud is strongest—and most dangerous. The critics and the mob find a common ground: both feel they are doing their duty by Culture.*

But there are differences. A minor one, possibly of sociological interest, is that the English reviewers overpraised *The Outsider* because its author was young (24) and so deserving of encouragement of his first book (I would say our age is much too permissive with the young) while their American colleagues overpraised *By Love Possessed* because its author was aging (54) and so deserving of encouragement of his twelfth book, especially since none of its predecessors had been a great *succès d'estime.* (The Devil has never lacked arguments.) The major difference, certainly of cultural interest, was that while there were three hostile reviews of *The Outsider* in important places (*The Times Literary Supplement, Spectator, Encounter*), over here the only hostile reviews of *By Love Possessed* were in two distinctly minor periodicals *(National Review, Yale Review).* Not a good showing. Especially when two of our serious quarterlies, the *American Scholar* and the *Hudson Review,* have printed respectful notices. However, *By Love Possessed* did fail to get either the important National Book Award or the Pulitzer Prize; if the voting had been last fall, it probably would have. But this kind of mania seems to be cyclic and we are now recovering our wits.

ONE OF THE HARDEST things for an ex-patriate to get used to is our advertising. Not only that it's blatant and vulgar; it's that too but not so much as Europeans think, and often it's more sophisticated than their advertising. After all, we've been at it longer. In fact, judging by its ads, American capitalism is mature to the point of decadence. For several generations, our economy has been organized around consumption rather than production. The consumer has manfully, doggedly done his best. (*Life* once reported that the average American family has accumulated in its closets and on its shelves about 10,000 separate possessions; these constitute "a major problem of family life" —our national symbol is not the overflowing cornucopia but rather the overflowing waste-basket.) But by now the poor fellow is just picking

* "Mob" is perhaps too strong. The ordinary reader, precisely because he is less involved in the cultural mechanism, often reacts with more sense and sensibility than the critics. I don't know how many purchasers of *The Outsider,* after a struggle, sadly put it aside unread, but I do have some data on *By Love Possessed.* The almost universal note of the ninety-odd letters I have received and of the perhaps twice that many verbal comments is: I couldn't read the book, and so I thought I must be a terrible Philistine because all the reviewers praised it; thanks for reassuring me. Meanwhile, every week, new legions, shepherded by their literary buglemen (OED: "soldiers placed in front of regiment while drilling to show the motions and time"), march bravely into the valley of death.

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at his plate. His appetite must be stimulated by outré refinements:

A left-handed check-book. An underwater scooter that motorizes lazy skin-divers ($350). The Executone, an inter-office communication system with "built-in courtesy"—about the only kind you get around an American office—that announces calls by "soft chime and signal light." A fountain pen that fills itself by capillary attraction. A toothpaste that is shot out by compressed air at the touch of a button (no more of that laborious squeezing), and another that comes out in red and white stripes. Parallel-O-Plate, a new window-glass that "keeps build ings from looking wrinkled." A beer-foaming machine that sends "a silent sound wave" (?) of "21,000 cycles a second" (??) through newly-filled bottles of beer and thus speeds up capping ($1,579). A heart-shaped electrical anti-snoring device called "Turn Over, Darling" that buzzes under the pillow of the party of the first part when the party of the second part presses a button ($10). A new girdle with the perhaps unfortunate name, "Open Sesame." An Esso lubricant that makes pop bottles shiny: "Oil research adds a bright note to your moments of pleasure. Take the clean, glistening bottle that lets the sparkle of a soft drink shine through. . . ." Etc., etc., etc.

In the balmy pre-Goldfine days, Sherman Adams, the "Assistant President," revealed that the actual President had asked "some able people" to work up "a world-wide cultural conference" on ways and means of Using Scientific Progress for Peace not War. (This is presumably a supplement to the guided missile program.) "Who is there who can say," asked Mr. Adams in one of the longest rhetorical questions since Demosthenes, "Who is there who can say that a convocation in this country of scholars, historians, artisans [*sic*], theologians, educators, sociologists, philosophers, artists, and musicians—representatives of the cultural pursuits of all the human race—meeting each other in their respective groups, could not suggest new and better ways for human beings to exist peaceably together and to reap the greatest rewards from man's scientific discoveries?" Well, I am one who can say they could not. And I can also tell the Research Society for Creative Altruism (founded by Professor Pitirim A. Sorokin of Harvard in 1949) which lately convened at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to work out "a scientific approach to man's moral problems," that its efforts will come to naught. Unfortunately, space doesn't permit giving the reasons for these predictions, but of their accuracy there is, also unfortunately, no doubt whatsoever.

Last fall the New York Board of Education removed *Huckleberry Finn* from its approved text-book list for public schools because Negro groups had objected to its use of the term "nigger," as in "Miss Watson's big nigger named Jim." That the book is (in part) a protest against the indignity of slavery, that Jim is its moral hero—these trivia didn't weigh in the scale against "nigger." Doubtless Mark

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Twain should have had his backwoodsmen refer to "Miss Watson's big Negro named Jim." After this *putsch* against *Huckleberry Finn,* another news item appeared. In 1942, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People met with the Motion Picture Producers Association to protest against "the stereotyped representation in films of Negroes as bumbling, comical characters." The protest was effective and fewer "undignified" rôles were offered to Negro actors. In fact, fewer rôles of any kind were offered to them: between 1945 and 1957 the number of Negro movie performers declined from 500 to 125. Last fall, the NAACP was therefore constrained to hold a second conference with the MPPA. "At the meeting," reports the *N.Y. Times,* "Mr. Wilkins, executive secretary of the NAACP, said 'misconceptions' had arisen [and] disavowed any intention on the part of the Association to act as a 'censor.'... He said there was no objection to Negro actors playing 'menial' characters, such as maids, butlers, or janitors, or being cast in comedy rôles. He stressed that the Association wanted to dispel the notion that it insisted on a 'one-for-one policy,' whereby if a Negro were shown in a menial rôle there must also be a dignified representation of another Negro." In short, Mr. Wilkins climbed down. The arts are a chancey field for pressure groups, even ones with aims as admirable as those of the NAACP. Censorship has what our ad-writers would call a Built-In, Automatic Kick-Back.

THE *New Yorker* for October 26, 1957 contained some extremely important (and extremely disturbing) data on the American Way of Life: a lengthy article by Eugene Kinkead summarizing the findings of a team of Army experts, mostly psychiatrists, who have completed a man-by-man study of the 4,428 American soldiers who came back from Communist prison camps after the Korean war. The Army made the study to find out what lay behind two shocking statistics: (1) "roughly one out of every three American prisoners in Korea was guilty of some sort of collaboration with the enemy," and (2) over one-third of our war prisoners—2,730 out of 7,190—died in captivity. It was not starvation or hardship that caused the high American death rate—the Army report shows the Communists fed their prisoners fairly well.

> "It is a sad fact, but it is a fact [said Major Anderson] that the men who were captured in large groups early in the war often became unmanageable. They refused to obey orders, and they cursed and sometimes struck officers who tried to enforce orders. Naturally, the chaos was encouraged by the Communists, who told the captives . . . rank no longer existed [and] they were all equal as simple prisoners of war released from capitalist bondage. At first, the badly wounded suffered most. On the marches back from the line . . . casualties on litters were often callously abandoned beside the road. Able-bodied prisoners refused to carry them, even when their officers commanded them to do so. If a Communist guard ordered a litter shouldered, our men obeyed; otherwise, the wounded were left to die. . . . The strong regularly took food from the weak. . . . Many men were sick, and these men . . . were ignored, or worse. Dysentery was common in the camps and . . . on winter nights, helpess men with dysentery were rolled outside the huts by their comrades and left to die in the cold."

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Many of the 2,730 prisoners who died, died because they simply lay down and gave up. It was partly that no one washed them, fed them, kept them on their feet—"I got mine—screw you, Jack!"—but it was also that they had lived too long in the land of plenty:

> What struck Major Anderson most forcibly was the almost universal inability of the prisoners to adjust to a primitive situation. "They lacked the old Yankee resourcefulness. This was partly . . . the result of some new failure in the childhood and adolescent training of our young men—a new softness." For months . . . most prisoners displayed signs of shock, remaining within little shells they had created to protect them from reality. There was practically no communication among the men, and . . . very few seemed to be interested even in providing themselves with the basic necessities of food, warmth, and shelter. . . . "An American soldier goes into the field with comforts that the majority of the world's population doesn't have even at home," said Anderson. "The average prisoner seemed lost without a bottle of pills and a toilet that flushed."

So, too, with collaboration. The Army researchers found there had been "a fantastic amount of fraternizing with the enemy." The majority of American prisoners "yielded in some degree to Communist pressure." Quite a large majority—87 per cent, in fact. The basic reason was the same as that which had caused the high death rate, a lack of solidarity:

> Major Segal told me that most of the repatriates came home thinking of themselves not as a part of a group, bound by common loyalties, but as isolated individuals. This emerged in their response to questions about what their service unit had been. Where the Turks proudly gave their regiment and brigade the Americans were likely to respond with the number of their prison camp.

Thus the latest effective authority (as with the Americans obeying their Communist guards but not their own officers) is the one the isolated, rootless American obeys. This is not individualism, it might better be called floating collectivism. The Chinese Communists who ran the camps exploited it. They did not use physical brutality or executions, because these would have defeated their purposes, which were (minor) to control the prisoners with the least difficulty and (major) to affect their way of thinking. In this, they were successful: "Most returned prisoners expressed sincere gratitude for the way the Chinese treated them. . . . When they talked about politics, they often used the term 'Socialism' rather than 'Communism' . . . and many of them said that while Socialism might not work in the United States . . . it was a good thing for China and other less advanced nations [shades of Henry Wallace!]." Who but the Communists, and in fact the Chinese Communists, would have the boldness to use war prisoner camps as propaganda centers, and the subtlety to make it work? Of course, they knew their enemy, in this case, U.S., or us.

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DIARY IN EXILE—1935

Leon Trotsky

February 7, 1935

The diary is not a literary form I am especially fond of; at the moment I would prefer the daily newspaper. But there is none available. ... Cut off from political action, I am obliged to resort to such ersatz journalism as a private diary. At the beginning of the war, when I was confined in Switzerland, I kept a diary for a few weeks. Later, after being deported from France to Spain in 1916, I did so again. I think that is all. Now once again I have to resort to a political diary. Will it be for long? Perhaps months; in any case not years. Events must come to a head in one way or another and put an end to the diary—if it is not cut short even sooner by a surreptitious shot directed by an agent of ... Stalin, Hitler, or their French friend-enemies.

Lassalle wrote once that he would gladly leave unwritten what he *knew* if only he could accomplish at least a part of what he felt able to *do*. Any revolutionary would feel the same way. But one has to take the situation as it is. For the very reason that it fell to my lot to take part in great events, my past now cuts me off from chances for action. I am reduced to interpreting events and trying to foresee their future course. At least this occupation is more satisfying than mere passive reading.

Here my contacts with life are almost entirely limited to the newspapers and partly to letters. It will not be surprising if my diary tends to take the form of a review of newspapers and periodicals. But it is not the world of the newspapermen as such that interests me, but the workings of the deeper social forces as they appear reflected in the crooked mirror of the press. However, I naturally am not committing myself in advance to this form. The advantage of a diary—alas the only one—lies precisely in the fact that it leaves one free from any literary requirements or prescriptions.

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Engels is undoubtedly one of the finest, best integrated and noblest personalities in the gallery of great men. To recreate his image would be a gratifying task. It is also a historical duty. On Prinkipo,* I

* In Turkey, where Trotsky began his exile outside Russia in 1929 after two years in Alma Ata, Siberia. In 1933, Trotsky moved to France where he stayed until 1935, going then to Norway as indicated in these excerpts from his diary which are published with the kind permission of Harvard University Press. (See 4th Cover.)

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worked on a book about Marx and Engels, but the preliminary materials were burned in a fire. I doubt that I will be able to return to this subject again. It would be good to finish the book on Lenin so as to move on to more timely work, a book on capitalism in the stage of disintegration.

Christianity created the figure of Christ to humanize the elusive Lord of Hosts and bring him nearer to mortal men. Alongside the Olympian Marx, Engels is more "human," more approachable. How well they complement one another! Or rather, how consciously Engels endeavors to complement Marx; all his life he uses himself up in this task. He regards it as his mission and finds in it his gratification. And this without a shadow of self-sacrifice—always himself, always full of life, always superior to his environment and his age, with immense intellectual interests, with a true fire of genius always blazing in the forge of thought. Against the background of their everyday lives, Engels gains tremendously in stature by comparison with Marx—though of course Marx's stature is not in the least diminished by this. I remember that after reading the Marx-Engels correspondence on my military train, I spoke to Lenin of my admiration for the figure of Engels. My point was just this, that when viewed in his relationship with the titan Marx, faithful Fred gains—rather than diminishes—in stature. Lenin expressed his approval of this idea with alacrity, even with delight. He loved Engels very deeply, and particularly for his wholeness of character and all-round humanity. I remember how we examined with some excitement a portrait of Engels as a young man, discovering in it the traits which became so prominent in his later life.

When you have had enough of the prose of the Blums, the Cachins and the Thorezes, when you have swallowed your fill of the microbes of pettiness and insolence, obsequiousness and ignorance, there is no better way of clearing your lungs than by reading the correspondence of Marx and Engels, both to each other and to other people. In their epigrammatic illusions and characterizations, sometimes paradoxical, but always well thought out and to the point, there is so much instruction, so much mental freshness and mountain air! They always lived on the heights.

•

February 15

Le Temps had published a very sympathetic report from its Moscow correspondent about the new privileges granted to the *kolkhozniks* [collective farmers], especially in regard to their acquiring ownership of horses, cattle, and other livestock. Certain further concessions to the petty bourgeois tendencies of the peasant seem to be in preparation. At this stage it is hard to predict the point at which they will manage to hold the line against the present retreat. But the retreat itself, brought on as it was by the extremely crude bureaucratic illusions of the preceding period, was not difficult to foresee. Since the

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Fall of 1929 the *Bulletin of the Russian Opposition** has been sounding the alarm against irresponsible methods of collectivization. "In this manipulation of uncoordinated tempos the foundation is being laid for an inevitable crisis in the immediate future." The rest is well known: the slaughter of the cattle, the famine of 1933, the untold number of victims, and the series of political crises. At the present time the retreat is proceeding at full speed. For this very reason Stalin is once again forced to cut down everyone and everything that stands to the left of him.

Revolution by its very nature is sometimes compelled to take in more territory than it is capable of holding. Retreats are possible—when there is territory to retreat from. But this general law by no means justifies wholesale collectivization. Its absurdities were not the result of elemental pressure from the masses, but of bureaucratic bungling. Instead of regulating the collectivization according to the productive and technical resources of the country and instead of extending the radius of collectivization in breadth and depth according to the dictates of experience, the frightened bureaucrats began to drive the frightened muzhiks into the collective farms with the knout. Stalin's narrow empiricism and utter lack of vision are nowhere more starkly revealed than in his commentaries on the subject of wholesale collectivization. But now, the retreat is being carried out without commentaries.

•

February 17

I imagine an old doctor, devoid of neither education nor experience, who day after day has to watch quacks and charlatans doctor to death a person dear to him, knowing that this person could be certainly cured if only the elementary rules of medicine were observed. That would approximately be the way I feel as I watch the criminal work of the "leaders" of the French proletariat. Conceit? No, a deep and indestructible conviction.

•

Our life here differs very little from imprisonment. We are shut up in our house and yard and meet people no more often than we would at visiting hours in a prison. True, within the last few months we have acquired a radio, but such things probably exist even in certain prisons, at least in America (not in France, of course). We listen almost exclusively to concerts, which now occupy a rather prominent place in our daily routine. For the most part, I listen to music superficially, while working. Sometimes music helps me to write, sometimes it hinders; in general I would say that it helps me to make first drafts of my ideas, but hinders me from working them up. N.,** as always, listens with absorption and concentration. Right now we are listening to Rimsky-Korsakov.

* Russian periodical published for several years by Trotsky's followers in Europe.—ED.
** Nathalia, Trotsky's wife.—ED.

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The radio reminds one how broad and varied life is and at the same time gives an extremely economical and compact expression to this variety. In short, it is an instrument perfectly suited to a prison.

•

March 21

It's spring, the sun is hot, the violets have been in bloom for about ten days, the peasants are puttering around in the vineyards. Last night we listened to *Die Walküre* from Bordeaux until midnight. Military service extended to two years. Rearmament of Germany. Preparations for a new *"final"* war. The peasants peacefully prune their vines and fertilize the furrows between them. Everything is in order.

The Socialists and the Communists write articles against the two-year term, and for the sake of greater impressiveness trot out their largest type. Deep in their hearts the "leaders" hope things will work out somehow. Here also everything is in order.

And yet this order has hopelessly undermined itself. It will collapse with a stench...

•

March 27

In 1903 in Paris a performance of Gorky's *The Lower Depths* was organized, the proceeds from which were to benefit *Iskra.* There was talk of giving a part to N., very likely on my initiative. I thought she would play her part well, "sincerely." But nothing came of it, and the part was given to someone else. I was surprised and distressed. Only later I understood that N. cannot "act a part" in any sphere. She always and under all conditions, all her life and in all possible surroundings—and we have changed quite a few of them—has remained true to herself, and has never allowed her surroundings to influence her inner life...

Today on our walk we went up a hill. N. got tired and unexpectedly sat down, all pale, on the dry leaves (the earth is still a bit damp). Even now she still walks beautifully, without fatigue, and her gait is quite youthful, like her whole figure. But for the last few months her heart has been acting up now and then. She works too much—with passion, as in everything she undertakes, and today it showed during the steep ascent up the hill. N. sat down all of a sudden—she obviously just *could not* go any further—and smiled apologetically. What a pang of pity I felt for youth, *her* youth... One night we ran home from the Paris Opera to the *rue* Gassendi, 46, *au pas gymnastique,* holding hands. It was in 1903. Our combined age was 46... N. was probably the more indefatigable one. Once, while a whole crowd of us were walking somewhere in the outskirts of Paris, we came to a bridge. A steep cement pier sloped down from a great height. Two small boys had climbed on to the pier over the parapet of the bridge and were looking down on the passers-by. Suddenly N. started climbing toward them up the steep smooth slope of the pier. I was petrified. I didn't think it was possible to climb up there. But she kept walking

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up with her graceful stride, on high heels, smiling to the boys. They waited for her with interest. We all stopped anxiously. N. went all the way without looking at us, talked to the children, and came down the same way, without having made, as far as one could see, a single superfluous effort or taken a single uncertain step... It was spring, and the sun was shining as brightly as it did today when N. suddenly sat down in the grass...

*"Dagegen ist nun einmal kein Kraut gewachsen,"** Engels wrote about old age and death. All the events and experiences of life are arranged along this inexorable arch between birth and the grave. This arch constitutes life itself. Without this arch there would be not only no old age, but also no youth. Old age is "necessary" because it has experience and wisdom. Youth, after all, is so beautiful exactly because there is old age and death.

•

April 2

Yesterday another period of ill health began for me. Weakness, slightly feverish condition, an extraordinary humming in my ears. Last time, during a similar spell, H. M. was at the local Prefect's. The latter inquired about me, and learning that I was sick, exclaimed in genuine alarm: "This is extremely unpleasant, extremely unpleasant! If he dies here, why, we will not be able to bury him under his assumed name!" Everyone has his worries!

•

April 4

All the current *"misères"* of our personal lives have receded into the background in the face of our anxiety for Seryozha, A. L., and the children.** I said to N. yesterday: "It seems now that our life before we got the last letter from Lyowa was almost beautiful and serene...". N. behaves with great fortitude, for my sake, but she feels all this immeasurably more deeply than I do.

The motive of *personal revenge* has always been a considerable factor in the repressive policies of Stalin. Kamenev told me how the three of them—Stalin, Kamenev, and Dzherzinsky—in Zubalovo, in the Summer of 1923 (or 1924?) spent the day in a "heart-to-heart" conversation over wine. They were bound together by their campaign against me, which had recently been initiated. After the wine, on the balcony, the talk touched upon a sentimental subject—personal tastes and predilections, something of that sort. Stalin said, "The greatest delight is to mark one's enemy, prepare everything, avenge oneself thoroughly, and then go to sleep."

His craving for revenge on me is completely unsatisfied: there have been, so to speak, physical blows, but morally nothing has been

* "No herb has grown to remedy this"—nothing can be done about it.—Ed.

** Stalin persecuted Trotsky's children relentlessly. A son, an engineer uninvolved in politics, disappeared in Russia; a daughter was driven to suicide; another son, a political co-worker of his father, died in suspicious circumstances in a Paris hospital.—Ed.

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achieved. There is no refusal to work, no "repentance," no isolation; on the contrary, a new historical momentum has been acquired which is already impossible to halt. This is the source of gravest apprehensions for Stalin: that savage fears ideas, since he knows their explosive power and knows his own weakness in the face of them. At the same time he is clever enough to realize that even today I would not change places with him: hence the psychology of a man stung. But if revenge on a higher plane has not succeeded—and clearly it will not succeed—it is still possible to reward oneself with police blows against people close to me. Naturally, Stalin would not hesitate a moment to organize an attempt on my life, but he is afraid of the political consequences: the accusation will undoubtedly fall on him. Blows against my intimates in Russia cannot give him the necessary "satisfaction," and at the same time they cause serious political inconveniences. To announce that Seryozha worked "under the direction of foreign intelligence service"? It's too incongruous; the motive of personal revenge would be revealed too directly; it would be too compromising for Stalin personally.

•

It is hard right now to work on my book on Lenin; my thoughts simply don't want to concentrate on the year 1893! The weather has changed sharply in the last few days. Although the gardens are in bloom, it has been snowing today since early morning; everything was covered with a white shroud; then it melted; now it is snowing again but melting right away. The sky is gray; from the mountains the fog is creeping down into the valley; in the house it is chilly and damp. N. is fussing over the housework with a heavy weight in her heart. Life is not an easy matter... You cannot live through it without falling into prostration and cynicism unless you have before you a great idea which raises you above personal misery, above weakness, above all kinds of perfidy and baseness.

•

April 5

The depth and strength of a human character are defined by its moral *reserves*. People reveal themselves completely only when they are thrown out of the customary conditions of their life, for only then do they have to fall back on their reserves. N. and I have been together for almost 33 years (a third of a century!), and in tragic hours I am always amazed at the reserves of her character... Whether because our strength is declining, or for some other reason, but I should very much like to fix N.'s image on paper, at least partially.

•

April 9

The Socialist and the Communist parties of France are continuing their fatal work: they carry their opposition to a point quite sufficient to embitter the bourgeoisie and to bring about a

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mobilization of forces of reaction and additional arming of Fascist detachments; but it is altogether insufficient for a revolutionary rallying of the proletariat. They provoke the class enemy as if on purpose and without giving anything to their own class. This is the shortest and most certain road to destruction.

•

April 10

Today, during a walk in the hills with N.—it was almost a summer day—I was thinking over my conversation with Lenin about a trial for the Tsar. It is possible that besides the time factor (we would "not have time" to bring a big trial to its conclusion, since the decisive events on the front might intervene), Lenin had another consideration with regard to the Tsar's family. Under judicial procedures, of course, execution of the family would have been impossible. The Tsar's family fell victim to that principle which constitutes the axis of monarchy: dynastic succession.

•

No news about Seryozha, and perhaps there won't be any for a long time. Long waiting has blunted the anxiety of the first days.

•

When I was getting ready to go to the front for the first time, between the fall of Simbirsk and that of Kazan, Lenin was in a gloomy mood. "Russians are too kind," "Russians are lazybones, softies," "It's a bowl of mush we have, not a dictatorship...." I told him: "As the foundation for our military units we should use hard revolutionary nuclei, which will support iron discipline from *within;* create reliable security detachments which will act from *outside* in concert with the inner revolutionary nucleus of the detachment, and will not hesitate to shoot deserters; we should guarantee competent leadership by putting a commissar with a revolver over every 'spets' [Tsarist officer serving as technical expert in the Red Army]; we should set up military-revolutionary tribunals and establish decorations for individual bravery in battle." Lenin answered something like this: "That is all true, absolutely true, but there is not enough time; if we act drastically (which is absolutely necessary) our own party will interfere: they will whine, set every telephone ringing, tug at our coat-tails—in short, interfere. Of course, revolution hardens one, but there is too little time..." When Lenin became convinced by our talks that I believed in our success, he supported my trip wholeheartedly, helped with the arrangements, showed great concern, kept asking about ten times a day over the telephone how the preparations were going, whether we should not take an airplane along on the train, etc....

Kazan fell. Lenin was wounded by the Social Revolutionist Kaplan. We recaptured Kazan. Simbirsk was retaken too. When I made a quick visit to Moscow, Lenin was convalescing in Gorki. Sverdlov told me:

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"Ilyich would like you to visit him. Shall we go together?" So we went. The manner in which Marya Ilyinishna and Nad. Konst. met me made me realize how impatiently and warmly they were expecting me. Lenin was in a fine humor and looked well physically. It seemed to me that he was looking at me with somehow different eyes. He had a way of *falling in love* with people when they showed him a certain side of themselves. There was a touch of this being "in love" in his excited attention. He listened eagerly to my stories about the front, and kept sighing with satisfaction, almost blissfully. "The game is won," he said, changing suddenly to a firm and serious tone. "If we have succeeded in establishing order in the army, it means we will establish it everywhere else. And the revolution—with order—will be unconquerable."

When Sverdlov and I were getting into our automobile, Lenin and N. K. stood on the balcony directly above the entrance, and again I felt the same slightly bashful, all-enveloping glance of Ilyich. He looked as if he wanted to say something more but could not find words. At that moment one of his bodyguards brought out some flowers in pots and started putting them into the car. Lenin's face darkened with anxiety. "You won't be uncomfortable?" he asked. I had paid no attention to the flowers and did not understand the reason for his concern. Only as we were approaching Moscow—the hungry, dirty Moscow of the Fall months of 1918—did I feel acutely ill at ease; was it appropriate to ride about with flowers at such a time? And just then I understood Lenin's concern: he had anticipated my uneasiness. He did have foresight.

At our next encounter I said to him: "The other day you asked about the flowers; I didn't even grasp, in the excitement of our meeting, what sort of 'discomfort' you had in mind. It suddenly dawned on me only as we were entering the city." "It made you look like a *meshochnik* [illegal trader]?" Ilyich asked quickly, and laughed gently. Again I caught that special friendly glance of his which seemed to reflect his pleasure that I had understood him. How deeply, how distinctly, and how indelibly all the details, large and small, of the Gorki visit are engraved on my memory!

Lenin and I had several sharp clashes because, when I disagreed with him on serious questions, I always fought an all-out battle. Such cases, naturally, were memorable for everyone, and later on much was said and written about them by the epigones. But the instances when Lenin and I understood each other at a glance were a hundred times more numerous, and our solidarity always guaranteed the passage of a question in the Politburo without disputes. This solidarity meant a great deal to Lenin.

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Last year N. and I were in Lourdes. What crudeness, insolence, nastiness! A shop for miracles, a business office for trafficking in Grace. The Grotto itself makes a miserable impression. That, of course, is

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a psychological calculation of the clerics: not to frighten the little people away by the grandeur of their commercial enterprise; little people are afraid of shop windows which are too resplendent. At the same time they are the most faithful and profitable customers. But best of all is the papal blessing broadcast to Lourdes by radio. The paltry miracles of the Gospels side by side with the radiotelephone! And what could be more absurd and disgusting than the union of proud technology with the sorcery of the Roman chief druid? Indeed, the thinking of mankind is bogged down in its own excrement.

•

May 8

Old age is the most unexpected of all the things that happen to a man.

•

May 16

We are not cheerful these days. N. is unwell: temperature of 38° [C.]—apparently a cold, but there may also be malaria mixed in with it. Every time N. is ill, I feel anew the place that she fills in my life. She bears all suffering, physical as well as moral, silently, quietly, inside herself. Right now she is more upset about my health than her own. "If only you would get well," she said to me today, lying in bed, "that's the only thing I want." She rarely says such things. And she said this so simply, evenly and quietly, and at the same time from such a depth, that my whole soul was stirred...

My condition is not encouraging. The attacks of illness have become more frequent, the symptoms are more acute, my resistance is obviously getting weaker. Of course, the curve may yet take a temporary turn upward. But in general I have a feeling that liquidation is approaching. [A curved line is drawn across these sentences.]

It's been about two weeks since I've written much of anything: it's too difficult. I read newspapers, French novels, Wittels' book about Freud (a bad book by an envious pupil), etc. Today I wrote a little about the interrelationship between the physiological determinism of brain processes and the "autonomy" of thought, which is subject to the law of logic. My philosophical interests have been growing during the last few years, but alas, my knowledge is too insufficient, and too little time remains for a big and serious work...

I must give N. her tea...

•

July 13

During the daytime lately I have been lying in the open air, reading and dictating letters to Jan. Newspapers and letters have begun arriving here directly and in ever-increasing numbers.

A few days ago our landlord had guests, also party editors; they came here to make our acquintance. "Fascism cannot happen in Norway." "We are an old democracy." "We have complete literacy."

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"Besides we have learned a lot: we have limited our capitalism..." And if Fascism conquers in France? In England? "We shall hold out." Why then did you not hold your currency when it fell in England?

They have learned nothing. Essentially, these people do not suspect that such men as Marx, Engels, and Lenin have lived in this world. The war and the October Revolution, the upheavals of Fascism have passed them by without a trace... For them, the future holds hot and cold showers.

I have read the biography of Eugene Debs. The biography is bad, lyrically sentimental; but in its way it reflects the lyrical and sentimental figure of Debs, remarkable of its kind, and in any case very attractive.

I am reading Edgar Allan Poe in the original, and am getting on, although not without difficulties. In recent years I have learned to dictate articles in French and German, to dictate to collaborators who are capable of correcting my syntactic errors on the spot. The latter are not infrequent. It has not been given to me to master *completely* any foreign language.

In English (which I know quite badly) I am making progress now with the help of intensive reading. Sometimes I catch myself wondering isn't it a bit too late? Is it worth while to expend this energy not on knowledge, but on language, a tool of knowledge?

In Turkey we lived "openly" under the public eye, but actually under a considerable guard (three comrades and two policemen). In France we lived incognito, first under a guard of our comrades (Barbizon), later alone (Isère). Now we are living openly and without guard. Even the yard gate is wide open day and night. Yesterday two drunken Norwegians dropped in to get acquainted. We chatted with them amiably and parted.

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ON DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

(An Open Letter to Nicola Chiaromonte)

Lionel Abel

Dear Nick:

When I read your piece in *Partisan Review* [Winter 1958] on Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago** I was struck by your enthusiasm for the novel (I had not yet read it), and puzzled by the fact that your very great fervor—I think you used the word "reverence"—did not communicate itself to me. Rather I wondered, after reading your article, "But why is Nick so enthusiastic?" And it occurred to me then that your enthusiasm for the book must be in excess of your admiration for it.

Since then I have read *Doctor Zhivago* and, as it happens, I, too, am enthusiastic about it. But let me make this quite clear; I do not greatly admire the novel. I like it, I was touched by it, I would like others to read it. Certainly it is one of the most interesting novels that has appeared in many years. But it is as certainly not a great book; I do not find it great either as a work of art or as a document. So I find myself in the same position that you must have been in when you wrote your article on Pasternak. My liking for this book is a personal fact without significance for literary judgment; it is an accident of my own intellectual history; there is no reason why it should influence anybody else.

I am assuming of course, that I agree with you—or you with me—about there being a distinct difference between enthusiasm and admiration. But maybe I am wrong on this point. Maybe for you they are the same. In that case I must presume to disagree with you. Enthusiasm for a work means a warm feeling for it—as one might have for a woman, without expecting anyone else to like her. But literary judgment requires not only warmth but coldness: a certain detachment. When you are judging a work of art you often have to curb your inclination to praise it. In a way, you are like a judge at a beauty contest: you can't go overboard for one girl because you personally find her more likable than the other contestants, you have to have some objective norms in mind; in any case, you have to think of the good looks of all the other girls who are participating, and not merely of the specially intriguing looks of the one contestant you would like to vote for. Let me put it

* *Doctor Zhivago,* by Boris Pasternak. Pantheon Press, New York, $5.00.

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more strongly: a man in love with one of the entries in a beauty contest is the last person one could expect to judge fairly.

Now I am supposed to judge Pasternak's *Doctor Zhivago* in this letter to you. So let me describe *my* enthusiasm for the book which is probably somewhat different from yours. First of all then, I like the man who wrote the book. And the book does communicate a rather definite image of him: I like his sweetness, his culture, his compassion, his desire to be interested in other people, I should say, rather than his interest in other people. Certainly I like his feeling for art and his desire to show that art is consistent with a true feeling for humanity; I like the fact that his book is disliked by the Soviet Authorities. I like it because in Russian political circles the author is blamed for having written it; I like the book because it is in exile and has to sustain itself on the praise of people who do not know the language it was written in, and make its way among those it was not primarily intended for, which is certainly to "eat bitter bread and climb the stranger's stairs" if I may quote the great poet you admire just as much as I do, but for whom you have never shown the slightest enthusiasm.... You will notice that among my reasons for being enthusiastic about Pasternak's novel, there is not a single reason for admiring it particularly.

But let me make explicit why I do not and cannot admire this novel, that is, beyond a certain point, for I am speaking here of a book which you described as a historical event, and which is, of course, a million times more interesting than James Agee's sentimental meditation of his boyhood which last year won the Pulitzer Prize in these Benighted States. Compared to Pasternak's novel, most of the books people are enthusiastic about, and even admire, are, of course, just plain rubbish. But when you praised the novel in your *P. R.* article you did not mean it was merely a better work than a best seller. Who knows? *Doctor Zhivago* may sell well, as a matter of fact, for reasons having nothing to do with its quality as a work of art. It has had a tremendous advance build up in the press already. But I return to the question: why is this book not admired by me, and not to be admired—that is beyond a certain point, of course, for the book does have quality.

First, I would consider the style, about which I really am enthusiastic, for even in translation it seems pure, very pure, free from any calculated effects and addressed to a simple, straightforward description of whatever the author wants to set before us. So far, so good. I have accounted for my enthusiasm. On the other hand, I cannot admire this style as I admire not only Tolstoy's, which is equally pure or purer, and as I admire the style of Gide, also pure, but so much more subtle, persuasive and more finely conceived as a tool for narration. Moreover, I have far more admiration for styles which are not pure at all, like Faulkner's, for example, which always irritates

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with its crudities, but yet always conveys an intense flavor or atmosphere. I even prefer Hemingway's style, so mannered, but yet so quick and cat-like. At its best, Hemingway's style has wonderful reflexes, like a good tennis-player's. Pasternak's style is pure, then, but it is also pure of accomplishment. It achieves purity and that is all. Maybe purity is even the wrong word for this style; I am thinking of Pascal's distinction between purity and innocence. Perhaps the best thing to call the style would be "innocent": for it is innocent of harm to language, innocent of harm to thought, innocent of falsification, innocent of contrivance—innocent of whatever literary crimes against feeling or language one can think of, but innocent also of the one crime for which the stylist is garlanded—the crime of making us see things as he sees them and replacing our own feelings by his.

The function of such a simplified and unostentatious style as Pasternak has employed in *Dr. Zhivago* should be ideally to render events directly and not intrude the author's linguistic concerns upon them. We get such directness in the novels of Tolstoy, in which the style is, as he wanted it to be, "transparent." But in *Dr. Zhivago,* which almost deliberately suggests comparison with *War and Peace,* there are no events of the kind described in Tolstoy's novel. For the burning of Moscow, the battle of Borodino, the intrigues among the Tsar's top generals, the analysis of Napoleon's whole campaign, the evocation of vast forces pushing thousands of men eastward and westward, the elemental Russian winter—what do we have to correspond to all this in *Dr. Zhivago?* And the events of the two Russian revolutions, as well as of the Civil War which followed the second, were certainly as full of meaning as Napoleon's Russian campaign. But of the two revolutions and of the Civil War, Pasternak has singled out only a few fragments on the periphery of the central action, tiny episodes of brutality and pain endured by certain individuals in personal contact with Dr. Zhivago. Actually, a highly subjective style would have been more appropriate considering the content. The simple recording of events without any central or massive significance bespeaks an effort to achieve universality in style without a corresponding universality of experience. Can this be completely sincere? I love the part which has the daring to represent the whole. In such representation there is always an element of misrepresentation, but this is always poetical, always pardoned. But the part which does not aspire to overcome, even partly, its a-part-ness, that part, if without guilt, is without interest. It is neither part nor whole. It is nothing. To be concrete: what has the interruption of a modest sewing establishment in Moscow which is on strike to do with so vast an event as the 1905 revolution? What have the painful episodes of guerrilla struggle during the Civil War to do with the October revolution and Russia's defense against foreign intervention? Surely these events were selected by the author because he preferred to concentrate on them.

Now there is nothing universal in such preference. Leaving out

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of account altogether any political motive for preferring to dwell on such facts, rather than treat of countless others, is it not the case that the purified, innocent, and simple style which renders these specially chosen facts has the effect of making them seem not subjectively sought for, but objectively imposed on the author. Indeed, at this point I am inclined to think that Pasternak's style is not even innocent, that its seeming objectivity and purity simply mask a very personal and subjective approach to historical events which at times the author admits to frankly.

I COME NOW to the characters in *Dr. Zhivago*. Of these there are only three worth considering, Dr. Zhivago himself, the hero, Lara, with whom he is in love, and whose love affair with him occupies the entire second part of the novel, and Strelnikov, Lara's husband, the guerrilla leader who turns himself into the very personification of the kind of efficient, ruthless chieftain the Bolsheviks conceived of as ideal for their purposes. This last character is hardly rendered real in any way. We meet him twice, I believe, and never learn anything more about him except that loving Lara and feeling that she did not love him, or loved him, rather, in too motherly a way, he was determined to transform himself into an efficient, masterful person and help bring about the destruction of the world which had ruined her. With this motive, mind you, totally without political content, Strelnikov we are told made himself over into a Bolshevik leader figure—though in the end he runs afoul of the Bolsheviks, is hounded by them and commits suicide. But never mind that, what bothers me is that I cannot accept the reality of this character nor believe in his motivation. I can believe that a good hearted, good natured and even gentle person in the period of chivalry, in order to win his lady's love or to kill one of her enemies, would become a resourceful and perhaps even cruel knight in the tournaments of those days. But this could only happen if he *believed in the principles of chivalry*, without which even his desire to excel as a knight, would be incomprehensible. Now, of course, I do not say it is impossible for a person to have become a Bolshevik leader, without believing in Bolshevik ideas, just in order to revenge a woman. No, that could be. The personal motive and the impersonal ideas and actions. But the man would have to be very strange indeed, and I feel nothing of such strangeness when I read the episodes in which Strelnikov appears. Such a character would be a living contradiction, immensely interesting I grant, if even barely convincing. But Strelnikov does not convince me in the slightest. His one political comment is a reduction of Lenin to his own level. "Lenin," he says, "fell upon the world as the personified retribution for its misdeeds." Not to see a difference between Lenin and himself is not to see his own contradictions—but this man is presented as too intelligent a person to be that blind. We are told that Strelnikov loves Lara. We never feel his love for her. We are told that he is ruthless. We never feel his ruthlessness. He is a

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flat, intellectually contrived figure, whom the author has simply not been able to infuse with life.

Nor is Lara, the unfortunate fallen woman, loved by both Dr. Zhivago and Strelnikov, a living person to me. She is right out of the pages of Dostoevsky, with Nastasya Filipovna for a model—but somehow softened with Tolstoyan sweetness. A mixture of Nastasya and Natasha, Sara is a purely literary and unbelievable person. Pasternak is, of course, clever enough to keep her off the stage most of the time. We know her mainly from what is said of her, rather than by her. But spoken of or speaking, she is simply unconvincing. We can understand that she loves Dr. Zhivago, we never understand her feelings for her husband, Strelnikov, or even her feelings for the man who originally seduced her and who in the end destroys her, causing her to make an orphan of Zhivago's child by her. There is nothing new in this doomed woman, no touch of nature or spirit, that reveals her as distinctly different from her predecessors in the Russian novel. And this is the heroine of a writer who continually asserts his belief in the essential significance of individuality.

THE CENTRAL FIGURE, Dr. Zhivago, is said to be an idealized figure of Boris Pasternak himself. He is presented as an artist, even a genius, and to have what the author considers the highest talent of all, namely a talent for life. Now in what does Zhivago talent for life consist? He is humane, he is meditative, he has a feeling of wonder and even of what Alfred Schweitzer has called "reverence for life." He is a physician and an artist, a poet. Now surely, all these are positive qualities. And if they could all be shown simultaneously in his actions and utterances, then certainly Pasternak would have to be granted a very great achievement, that of having created an exemplary human figure. In fact, this whole novel with all its other faults could stand or fall as a book on one's judgment of its hero.

We are indeed made to feel Zhivago's love for living creatures, his warm interest in his fellows and a personal feeling of superiority connected with his capacity to see life artistically. Yes, that can all be granted. So far, though, we have nothing more than a type of artist with humane inclinations. But let us see the man in action. When the whites are attacking the reds who have taken him prisoner because they lack a trained physician, he finds he is sympathetic to the whites who are firing at him; this is because of their fine young faces. He would even like them to win. There is a rifle handy, not being used, and he feels called upon to fire it. Very carefully, he avoids firing at the attacking soldiers and singles out the stump of a tree as his target. Even so he manages to wound one of the enemy, whom he is unable to regard as his enemy at all. Now, in this incident, I cannot find a trace of the qualities the hero is supposed to have. I see neither manly courage; nor great compassion. And the firing of a gun at a tree stump which yet results in wounding one of the whites, to whom Zhivago is actually more

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sympathetic, strikes me as very analagous to that idle, directionless playing with words by a poet which might, and often does lead, to some real consequence in literature. So I believe from the incident that Zhivago is an artist, but I still cannot see him as a man. But perhaps I should take the big dramatic moment in the book when Zhivago sends Lara away with the man who had originally seduced her, being unwilling to accept this man's protection for himself. He knows this is the end and that he will never see her again. "...His words were breathed almost soundlessly into the cold afternoon air. 'Farewell, my only love, my love forever lost... Farewell, Lara, until we meet in the next world, Farewell, my love, my inexhaustible, everlasting joy. I'll never see you again, I'll never, never see you again.'"

After this outburst he says the following, talking to himself as if to her: "I'll stay with you a little, my unforgettable delight, for as long as my arms and my hands and my lips remember you. I'll put my grief for you in a work that will endure and be worthy of you. I'll write your memory into an image of aching tenderness and sorrow." And Zhivago sets out to do just that. With Lara gone, he drinks vodka and writes about her. Is this a convincing expression of grief for lost love? How can Dr. Zhivago who is supposed to be supremely conscious, with a consciousness far more acute than the politically oriented people of his time, how can he not have understood that in yielding in the impulse to write about his beloved immediately after his loss of her, he was taking a practical attitude toward his own grief, trying to get something out of it, literature, maybe even glory? Had Pasternak at least made Zhivago face up to some suspicion of this kind about himself, the man would be more real and likable, even if he kept on writing poems. But the thought never crosses Dr. Zhivago's mind. He does not seem to realize there is something monstrous in his behavior. He accepts his impulse to write at that moment, naively, without questioning it. Yet, really, what could be more comical? And how could a Russian writer who must know Dostoevsky and Chekhov by heart not have seen this? For in the event, were it truly understood and rendered with dramatic force, we would have the whole pathos of the man of letters, who can salvage masterpieces from catastrophes, and hence lacks the vulnerability to experience which is the basis of any real moral attitude. But Pasternak, who knows Chekhov and Dostoevsky, is not up to such knowledge, for he wants to present Dr. Zhivago as a model, as an exemplar of the right attitude toward life. We have come a long way down from Myshkin and Pierre Bezhukov and this fall from consciousness is surely not something Pasternak can lay to the account of the October Revolution and its leadership.

There is one other character about whom something should be said: Zhivago's wife, Tonia, if only because her letter to him when he is living with Lara is perhaps the most moving thing in the whole novel. Touching and beautiful, the letter at last makes one feel that Tonia exists. So much so, even, that one cannot but object to the following

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passage on the love of Zhivago and Lara for each other: "They loved each other, not driven by necessity, by the 'blaze of passion' often falsely ascribed to love. They loved each other because everything around them willed it, the trees and the clouds and the sky over their heads and the earth under their feet. Perhaps the surrounding world, the strangers they met in the street, the wide expanses they saw in their walks, the rooms in which they lived and met, took more delight in their love than they themselves did." One cannot help thinking at the risk of being considered prosaic that Tonia had just a bit more interest in Zhivago and Lara than did the clouds, the trees, the earth, the sky, wide expanses, strangers met in the street, or the rooms Zhivago and Lara lived in. And Tonia did not will that they should love, nor did their love delight her....

BUT WHAT IS THE GENERAL meaning of this novel? And by meaning I do not have in mind ideas expressed in passing, of which there are a good many, some interesting, some apt, and others utterly uncalled for, irrelevant and highly objectionable, for instance, the attack on the Jews made by two different characters at different times and repeating the identical criticism—to wit—that the Jews are unjustified in clinging to any type of collective identity. Why do they not all become individuals? On the level of ideas there is good and bad in about equal measure in *Dr. Zhivago*. So I shall skip both what I like and dislike. I am speaking of the meaning of the story. What Pasternak is showing us in this book is the effort of two people, Lara and Zhivago, to defend against history certain transhistorical values, the values of sympathy, gentleness, authentic love and a feeling for truth in language and in action. I shall not argue with the position that *no* values are transhistorical. Perhaps the world will come to an end, but until it does I am sure that people will talk to each other, that men and women will make love and that women will bear children. So that so far as I am concerned the values implied by these activities can perfectly well be called transhistorical values, or even eternal values, if it is to one's taste to talk big, though it happens not to be mine. And here I am ready to grant your enthusiasm for Pasternak's novel, and mine, too, this much: a great theme was implied in this book. For to show history at odds with all that gives it value and all that gives value to history having to fight against it, surely that is a great and tragic theme, reminding one of the vision of the Greeks who kept seeing Gods at war in what to all appearances were the intrigues of men. I say a great theme was implied by Pasternak's novel. But was it realized?

To realize it of course, Pasternak would have had to present not only people more real than Zhivago and Lara but a revolution more real than the October revolution is in this book. He would have had to show the revolution in its truth and its truth was not only in its atrocities. He would have had to show the two lovers Lara and Zhivago in their falseness to each other, and to themselves, for transhistorical

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values are not sturdier than historical forces and real events. He could not realize this theme by idealizing, as he does, Zhivago's love for Lara and her love for him on the one hand, and on the other devaluing the revolution, rendering it as a meaningless sequence of chance events, produced by incompetents, dreamers, theoreticians, people with not enough grasp of the meaning of life to behave like Lara and Zhivago. The moment we realize that this is his attitude to the revolution we see the tragic theme has evaporated. There are no real antagonists, there is no history with its own elemental justification, there are only the two intelligent, sensitive lovers pressed upon and finally destroyed by processes whose meanings do not even interest them.

THESE ARE THE REASONS, Nick, I find it impossible to admire a work which did touch me at times and for which I still retain a fair amount of enthusiasm. You may say that it is not right to express such views, that Boris Pasternak is to be heralded just for having written this book with the implied criticism of the Soviet state it contains, and that at this juncture of events, with the author under ban and, for all I know, under attack in Moscow, we who are abroad ought to sing his praises and recommend the novel so highly that the Soviet authorities will finally be forced by world opinion to enable all Russians to read *Dr. Zhivago*. I do not think, though, that you would say this. I am sure that you think too highly of Boris Pasternak, as do I myself. Whatever its faults as a novel, *Dr. Zhivago* was written by a man who values freedom, and values it in a society where it is under constant attack. Certainly he deserves all our respect for this. But on the other hand, since he is such a man, I am sure he wants us to say about his own book only what we think is true of it. Neither more nor less.

On Creating a "Higher Version of Man" In "People's China"

PEIPING, April 17 (Reuters)—Communist China's leading woman author, Ting Ling, who was denounced as a Rightist last year, has been dismissed from the vice chairmanship of the China Authors Association, Jenmin Jihpao reported today. The 53-year-old Stalin Prize winner is believed to be scrubbing floors as penance.

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MARXIAN ECONOMICS REVISITED

Ben B. Seligman

The contempt frequently expressed by many economists toward Karl Marx first began to dissolve when the growth of monopoly and the possibility of such disturbing phenomena as unemployment became genuine realities. More and more, social scientists came to agree that Marx's examination of the economic system in its totality was relevant to the problems at hand. They noted that he had tried to work out carefully and analytically relationships between the various social and economic components. He even set up "models," so dear to the hearts of modern theorists. But above all, he dealt with technology, underconsumption, unemployment and the concentration of capital. These were big questions and Marx sought to supply the big answer. That he was not always able to come up with the right one is beside the point.* The fact is, he was a serious thinker who dealt with serious problems. That so many of his supposed intellectual descendants assert all the Marxian phrases to be absolute truth is merely sad, for this reveals them to be precisely the sort of fools Marx abhorred.

Orthodox economists had evolved through the years some fairly elegant analytical structures from which, as Mrs. Joan Robinson, the noted British economist, says, it was possible to derive with great accuracy the value of a cup of tea. Marx, although possessing much cruder tools, exhibited a far deeper sense of the meaningful: his formulations of economic problems tower over most of the works of his time "in rough and gloomy grandeur."** Capitalism was in a sense to be admired, for it had an historic mission, to wit, spreading its productive power over the face of the globe. It enforced the accumulation of capital and thereby increased the wealth of nations. Marx wanted to demonstrate, however, that the major benefits of this inexorable process accrued to the few and it was because of this fundamental "inner contradiction" that capitalism was bound to stumble.

Despite his passion for agitation, Marx was at heart a scholar who, as Joseph A. Schumpeter once remarked, wrestled with the relevant facts and ideas and frequently came up with really useful generalizations. Marx was interested, said Schumpeter, "... in the problem as a problem [and] was primarily concerned with sharpening the tools of

* *Cf.* Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis,* New York, 1954, p. 386 ff.
** Joan Robinson, *On Re-reading Marx,* Cambridge, 1953.

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analysis proferred by the science of his day, with straightening out logical difficulties, and with building . . . a theory that in nature and intent was truly scientific whatever its shortcomings."* The historical method he employed was remarkably effective and the interrelations of social change with given modes of production could not be denied.

II

In a wonderful series of talks to students a few years back, Mrs. Robinson put Marx into the same basket with Marshall and Keyness.** This must have appeared outrageous to the orthodox on both sides, but there is merit in her argument. The only substantial difference between these gentlemen, said Mrs. Robinson, is the color of the glasses through which they look at economic reality: Marshall's are blue, Keynes' slightly pink and Marx's a bit red. For example, all three agree that revenue minus wages, materials cost and depreciation yield profit. However, they do not agree on the definition of the elements to be deducted from revenue. As to the remainder, they simply had different names for what the reasonable person calls profit. Marshall considered profit a great driving force, Marx scorned it and Keynes was indifferent, believing it fine so long as it did not impede the proper functioning of the economic system.

Still, most economists did not bother to find out what it was that Marx was talking about and it was necessary to await the arrival of monopoly, imperfect competition and cycles once again to discuss exploitation, accumulation and economic growth.† One difference is that today we use a seemingly more esoteric terminology. For example, Roy Harrod, a noted British theoretician and biographer of Keynes, has developed a theory of "warranted growth" in which it is shown that when an economy moves away from equilibrium it is rather hard to get it back. Our recent economic exhilaration illustrates the point. But what is this other than what Marx called capitalism's "law of motion"?

Of course, die-hard followers of pure Marxism find it extraordinarily difficult to accept the belief that someone other than Marx could have stumbled across the same ideas, nor are they willing to accept the notion that certain aspects of the master's analysis might be incorrect or inconsistent. As Mrs. Robinson says, when a Marxist is asked whether capital is to be defined as a stock or a flow he is apt to reply that Marx was a genius. This, usually known as the Moscow subway argument, is of no help in working out an economic, or for that matter, any other kind of problem.

Marx himself approached economic questions with an enormous command over relevant factual data which he hammered into shape with some interesting analytical tools. One of these was the "materialist interpretation of history," a concept which, contrary to what most

* Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy,* New York, 1952, p. 21.
** J. Robinson, *Marx, Marshall and Keyness,* Delhi, 1955.
† *Cf.* J. Robinson's *Essay on Marxian Economics,* London, 1942.

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commentators have said, did not mean that men are motivated by purely economic or material considerations. The early writings, notably the *German Ideology* and the *Holy Family,* clearly show that non-economic factors and the way in which social reality reflects itself in individual behavior were important facets of the Marxian view. Marx did not say—and here the burden of proof is on those who insist he did—that art and ethics and religion are reducible to material elements. What he did maintain was that economic situations markedly shape the institutions and ideas of men, and in so saying he tried to prove that it was necessary to explore the ideology of the moment. The various forms of production known to history, said Marx, deeply affect social relationships and these in turn condition men's attitudes.* While engaged in this investigation, Marx was not averse to pouring slop over the heads of his hapless opponents, who in his eyes confounded verbal formulations with actual behavior. Such polemics did not make the Marxian viewpoint any the more palatable.

Yet, as had been noted by other writers, the materialist interpretation remains but a brilliant approximation. Its very facility makes it a dubious device, for social behavior is infinitely more complex and more devious than it would imply. Even if we grant that the "modes of production" exhibit a kind of internal logic in the course of their exfoliation, during which succeeding modes of production are evolved, we must allow for numerous exceptions that are explicable only by admitting a good deal more interaction between the economic and non-economic than Marx might have agreed to.

III

It is in the pure economics of his social science that the most useful parts of Marx's system may be identified. Here Marx tried to demonstrate that value was derived from the given socio-economic relationships that men enter into for the purpose of producing means of subsistence. Economics, he said, is concerned with those relationships which are set in an employer-employee context. That this is, in a sense, little more than a sociological truism and merely the starting place for genuine economic analysis seems to have escaped Marx and by belaboring the point he merely created an alien mystique.

The labor theory of value, which is wrapped up in Hegelianisms, is where Marx begins. The theory, stemming mainly from Ricardo, proclaims that the value of a commodity is proportional to the quantity of socially necessary labor time included in it. It is obvious that this will hold, even in Marx's framework, only under conditions of perfect competition: there is nothing in the Marxian model to account for the existence of monopoly or other imperfections. The essential point, however, is that from this definition flows surplus value, the excess created by labor over its own worth. It should be noted,

* *Cf.* T. B. Bottomore and M. Rubel, *Karl Marx: Selected Writings in Sociology and Social Philosophy,* London, 1956.

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especially for analytical purposes, that labor power, the term preferred by Marx, acts only on part of the equipment committed to production. The value-creating process affects only the portion of the means of production which enters into the final product; thus only circulating capital and depreciation are involved rather than the total stock of capital. This has caused no end of confusion, for it is generally customary in computing the rate of profit to consider total capital, a procedure rejected by Marx.*

The theory, though, had a logical function. Marx clearly intended to use these concepts for establishing conditions of economic equilibrium in the broad, macroeconomic sense, since the idea of a rate of surplus value applied to a single enterprise was clearly little more than an heroic abstraction. Yet it was possible to argue in favor of the Marxian definition of the profit rate when the concept was extended to the entire economic system. Despite this, the theory was as static as anything ever developed by the marginal economists with their Robinson Crusoe doctrines. It must be recognized that prices and production according to Marxian categories can be explained only through a number of restrictive assumptions which are unlikely to exist in a dynamic economy. Nor can the labor theory of value really operate as a measuring device, surely an important function for such a theory. Try to explain price level changes via the labor theory and we come up against the skilled versus unskilled worker problem; or again, consider the famous question of the transformation of value into prices, over which a furious debate has raged through the years. (Joan Robinson contends that the whole problem was an unreal one, for the very values which need to be explained are obtained by first transforming prices into value!) Another problem was the distinction between productive and non-productive labor. According to Marx, packaging and bookkeeping do not add value to goods, they merely help in its realization. How then are we to account for wages and profits in commercial enterprise? Marx's answer was that these were obtained from the surplus value created in industry. Just how this was done, is not clear, but there is the admission that from the "commercial capitalist's" view bookkeepers are productive.**

The fact is that the labor theory of value has a metaphysical rather than a genuinely economic base. Labor is divided into concrete and abstract labor; the latter supposedly represents the common quality of work *qua* work. While this is never defined precisely, it seems to be the average of abstract labor that provides the standard of measure for value. Marx's objective was to make labor value the foundation of his exploitation theory, which in accordance with the organic composition of capital, or the degree of mechanization, would differ in different industries. The rate of profit, however, would tend toward equality in all lines because of competition among capitalists. But somehow Marx

* *Cf.* Robinson, *Essay*, Chap. 5 *et seq.*

** Schumpeter calls attention to this implication of Marx's discussion of this point in his *History*, p. 628; *cf. Theorien über den Mehrwert* in the Terence McCarthy translation, p. 194 ff.

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gets into difficulties when he says that prices correspond to values, for this implies that the rate of exploitation tends toward the same level in all industries. This is a problem that not even the ingenious revision of von Bortkiewicz has been able to solve convincingly.*

More specifically, the labor theory of value is non-operational, for not only does it fail to measure changes in the price of goods or productivity, but it is impossible to fit empirical material into its framework. Output has risen over the years despite a reduction in man-hours, and even recourse to the famous "socially necessary labor time" phrase fails to rescue the theory, which is unverifiable and simply describes a general tendency easily countervailed. In that sense it is merely a pure concept. We must conclude that the labor theory of value fails as an analytical tool. If it works at all, it can do so only under conditions of perfect competition and if we are willing to make the assumption that labor is the sole factor of production. The glaring unreality of such a premise is self-evident.**

IV

One is tempted to agree with Mrs. Robinson when she says that "...no point of substance in Marx's argument depends on the labor theory of value." Yet despite this unnecessary appendage, many parts of the Marxian economic corpus can still stand. The fact is that it is a remarkable body of doctrine which incorporates numerous effective devices for explaining the internal drive of the capitalist economy. With its emphasis on the long view the Marxian system has been fairly useful in sketching the direction in which we have at times moved. While ordinary economics has proved superior in ascertaining the price of tea and other little things, Marxian economics has been concerned with questions in the round.

This characterization may be demonstrated more clearly when we leave behind the metaphysics in the early sections of Vol. I and go on to the problems of circulation and accumulation which were more fully explored later on in Marx's opus. These are perhaps the most spectacular parts of his doctrine, for they represent in a really fundamental way a theory of economic development. Here the fact is underscored that the central theme of *Das Kapital* is precisely what the title implies—man-made means of production and the social relations that govern their use. Since the latter are rooted in the wage relationship, capital must be defined by alienation from tools and ownership of property. Workers are not only legally free but also free from the means of production. It is because of this that capital begins to assume a monopolistic aspect, for it is the capitalist who, upon hiring the means of produc-

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* L. von Bortkiewicz, "Value and Price in the Marxian System," reprinted in *International Economic Papers,* No. 2, London, 1952.

** Orthodox Marxists such as Ronald Meek of the University of Glasgow still feel that the labor theory is good science and that there have been striking developments in it since 1894. It is not clear whether Meek has in mind the puerile discussions under Stalin. See Meek's *Studies in the Labor Theory of Value,* London, 1956.

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tion, comes into possession of the entire product which he then distributes to the different factors.

Here then is the nub of the circulation and reproduction process. Industries are divided into those supplying new means of production, those which provide workers with the means of subsistence, and the ones whose output consists of luxury goods to satisfy the consumption of capitalists. The production of each is divisible into variable capital, constant capital and surplus value. In all three groups the latter may be consumed or reinvested. If investment is the course to be followed, then surplus value again becomes either variable or constant capital, in which case part of the output must be exchanged against goods of the other sectors. For example, capitalists making the means of production may, if they wish, directly reinvest part of their output to replace that used up in the manufacturing process. Other portions would be exchanged for wages goods and luxury items produced in the remaining sectors of the economy.*

The foregoing is a rather simplified version of what appears to be the most useful element in the Marxian apparatus. At this stage but a first approximation, it nevertheless does lead eventually to what Veblen called the "climax of [Marx'] great work," the law of accumulation. In the beginning there was no accumulation, no ingathering of capital, merely replacement, as in the stationary state of the bourgeois economist. This is implicit in the simple reproduction of Vol. I. Consumer goods, fixed and circulating capital are put back as used, so that the value created during a given period is equal to the claims on consumption. The Marxian scheme here may be visualized as a flow analysis of income, perhaps the first analytically effective one in the history of economics. Output represents what Lord Keynes used to call aggregate supply while income comprises expenditure on both means of production and consumption. Thus, each component in the circulation process may be expressed as a supply and a demand. So far no serious problems have been encountered, for in this model there is no technical progress and the ratio of capital to labor is unaltered. In fact, the labor theory of value almost comes into its own in such an "economy" since the unit product value is also constant.

V

But to Marx accumulation and growth were central, for this was the locus of all the fundamental contradictions of the capitalist order. Involved in this process was the fall in the rate of profit and the periodic eruption of economic crisis. And superimposed on all this was group conflict, class consciousness and the whole sociology of revolution. These were the political elements in the story which have served unfortunately to obscure the economic analysis. Basically, the economic problem was a matter of the way in which the continuous structure of labor requirements affected accumulation and the changing struc-

* *Das Kapital,* Vol. II. Chaps. 18-21 (Kerr edition).

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ture of capitalism. English history provided Marx with many striking illustrations of this inexorable process. The industrial revolution offered the first occasion for accumulating fixed rather than circulating capital. Wealth could now be measured by buildings and machinery rather than by stocks of goods in warehouses. The small farmer was forced off the land; cottage industries were violently disrupted; native economies in colonial regions were torn asunder; the worker irrevocably lost control of his tools; and heavy, fixed equipment became the hallmark of a new order. Accumulation was associated with a "rising organic composition of capital."

These dynamic changes demonstrated to Marx the need for a more complex model of circulation. This he built in the "expanded reproduction" scheme revealing how capital was augmented. We know that not all of the surplus value available to capitalists is consumed: some portion is invested for the express purpose of enlarging the total stock of capital. This implies the need to create more means of production than that necessary to replace used-up constant capital. More wages goods are also needed for the workers. The analysis of expanded reproduction then goes on to break down the value categories in a way that accounts for their different combinations. Surplus value is now distributed to ordinary consumption for the capitalist, additional variable capital and more constant capital. However, what happens is that the constant capital in the producers' goods industries increases faster than the output of consumers' goods and a disproportionate economic structure becomes more and more evident. Equilibrium can only be maintained if both the producers' and consumers' goods industries are able to expand together. According to Marx, this is quite unlikely.

Another way of looking at this question is to say that in the case of an ever-increasing stock of capital, investment can only occur when the market itself keeps expanding. If savings are less than what is required for ordinary investment, then capital is apt to become scarce with economic exhilaration as the likely, and usually welcome, result. The situation is, of course, somewhat more complicated than this, since new capital might be unused or merely substituted for earlier, older capital, in which case the economy must face up to a possible waste of resources.

In an expanding economy productive capacity increases in consonance with income. The required ratio for stable economic growth is established when the rate of increase in capacity equals the rate of increase in income. Simple offsets to savings are not enough to maintain a "growing equilibrium," for in fact, investment must always exceed saving. The economy must behave like an Einsteinian universe, always expanding at an accelerated rate. But should investment fail to meet these conditions, excess capacity would soon ensue, giving rise to deflationary factors. Add to this situation leakages in income flow and it would appear unlikely that a continual expansion is indefinitely sustainable.

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The foregoing seems to express the matter in Keynesian rather than Marxian language. But Marx was not unaware of the savings-investment problem: his analysis of disequilibrium in simple reproduction demonstrates a fairly clean grasp of the question. For example, he points to an accumulation of depreciation reserves unmatched by demand offsets as a cause of economic crisis. In his view, equilibrium requires renewals of fixed capital in sufficient quantity to balance "amortization." This is not the only parallel with Keynesian thinking. Marx, like Keynes, rejected automatism in economics. Shift a few terms about and the Marxian decline in the rate of profit becomes a 19th-century cousin of the Keynesian marginal efficiency of capital. Keynes also believed, as did Marx, that accumulation was not merely a passive phenomenon, but an active, often creative, often disturbing process penetrating all interstices of the economic system. But above all, to both Marx and Keynes, economic breakdown resulted from internal insufficiencies. At this point the major distinction between the two writers is their use of aggregates: Marx talked about surplus value while Keynes spoke of income flow and effective demand.

VI

Surplus value was for Marx the instrument of accumulation. It was the rate of saving out of surplus value that governed investment: the pace, however, was set by the competitive drive to defeat one's rivals in the market place. It is easy to understand why such factors as the rate of exploitation and labor productivity were viewed by Marx as important, for these were the very elements that swelled the available total of surplus value. Now, accumulation means an increased demand for labor, despite the fact that the value theory adopted by Marx would suggest otherwise. But how could one account for misery and unemployment, if the demand for labor in a dynamic capitalist order was increasing? Here Marx dragged in the *deus ex machina* of the industrial reserve army, which presumably kept growing as the proportion of labor utilized in production declined. Wages in the long run were supposed to be determined by the size and effectiveness of the reserve army. But under the most favorable conditions, the increase in capital equipment might take place without changing the technical input factors. Accordingly, the division of the national income becomes a matter of haggling and bargaining, and on this point Marx's answer is no better than that of the "bourgeois" economist.

Under these conditions Marx admitted the possibility of a rise in the absolute level of wages. But he did suggest that the relative share would decline, for though real wages might rise, they were unlikely to rise proportionately with productivity. The fact is that modern experience indicates a contrary trend, for the possibility of wages increasing in consonance with productivity has been demonstrated much too often to make the Marxian proposition a valid one. Labor's share in national output over the long run has not fallen, as J. Steindl says in

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his *Maturity and Stagnation in American Capitalism.** In many industries the drop in the wage proportion that might have been occasioned by technological change was overcome by increases in productivity. S. Kuznets has offered data to show that the share of wages in net income moves in ways that Marx would not have thought possible—downward in an upswing and upward in a depression. That is to say, wages are sticky. Marx's reasoning on this score was entirely classical, for he thought that capitalists get themselves out of the rough by cutting wages. Yet Keynes showed that this only worsened matters.

Even contemporary die-hard followers of Marx have had their hitherto staunch belief shaken on this point. A debate last year among French Marxists revolved around the question of potential versus actual remuneration. It was grudgingly conceded that some improvement in wages and living standards had occurred, but still, it was insisted, the restricted opportunities of the working class must prove Marx's theory of increasing misery! The evidence offered was the case of a worker who once walked to work but now drives a Renault while his employer uses a Cadillac instead of an ancient horse and buggy. A further indication of "increasing misery," said the French Marxists, was the great amount of time workers must spend traveling to and from the job. It is obvious that the notion of immiseration—whether relative or absolute—is no longer defensible.

Another major argument in the Marxian system relates to the rate of profit.** Here Marx looked to the structural organization of capitalism: that is, he did not stress the lack of sales or falling demand as the cause of profit declines, but pointed rather to the rising organic composition of capital. It was really a matter of simple arithmetic, for if the rate of exploitation was constant, then with an increasing ratio of capital to labor the rate of profit was bound to fall. Only through a greater degree of exploitation, more intense work, speed-up, depressing wages below the value of labor power, or through foreign trade, could declining profit rates be halted. These countervailing forces might be quite potent, Marx conceded. But he supplied no definite answer as to the general tendency over the long run, feeling that the specific circumstances in a given era would determine the actual movement of profits.

Now, there seems to have been some difficulty in relating the failing profit rate theme to accumulation, for it is obvious that the latter would soon grind to a halt with declining profits. Marxists respond to this question by gleefully underscoring it as one of capitalism's "contradictions," since it is conceivable, they say, for the totality of profit to rise while the rate falls. If, however, the significant ratio were redefined as the proportion of profit to wages, there would be no valid reason why the rate could not keep increasing. Moreover, it would also appear to be quite reasonable to relate profits to the sale of output and this means ultimately to effective demand. With the latter kept

* Oxford, 1952, Chap. XIV, p. 228 ff.
** *Cf.* Robinson, *Essay*, p. 41 ff.

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steady on a fairly even keel, one would think that the rate of profit could be maintained without this particular internal contradiction. The fact is that the Marxist theory of the falling rate of profit is too constricted and too limited to be fully useful for analytical purposes.

It should be obvious that to Marx falling profit and accumulation could hardly be separated from the problem of economic crisis. Continuous, uninterrupted accumulation under capitalism seemed unlikely. In fact, on close inspection it was impossible. The realization of surplus value would require an expansion of demand, an unlikely development in the face of the limited purchasing power made available to the mass of the population. The last cause of all real crises, he said, "always remains the poverty and restricted consumption of the masses as compared to the tendency of capitalist production to develop the productive forces in such a way that the absolute power of consumption of the entire society would be their limit." This was to him a fundamental "contradiction" which stemmed from the tendency toward disproportionate growth in the producers' and consumers' goods industries. Further complications arose from such factors as the excessive resort to credit, the relationships of interest to profit, speculative activities, monetary inflation and errors in planning. The increasing inability to realize surplus value impedes further investment while paradoxically stimulating labor saving devices. In all this there is revealed an inherent tendency to disequilibrium, for according to the Marxian model, the value of the replacement goods fails to match accumulated depreciation reserves. In Keynesian terms, there is an insufficiency of investment.

VII

There is much in Marx's analysis of economic upset that anticipated modern thinking. The comments on the impact of speculation and overselling and the compulsion to produce beyond the limits of reasonable demand is not unrelated to the contemporary problem of inventory stockpiling. Marx comes close here to what present day economists call acceleration, or the way in which demand affects investment. The distinction between industrial and financial circulation is a reminder of old-time depression talk about hoarding. There was also implicit recognition of the role of money as a store of value as well as a means of payment. But in contradistinction to others, notably Keynes, Marx did not believe that it was possible to shore-up the economy by hasty schemes designed to bolster consumer demand. There is a clear implication in his theory that capitalism can not sustain for long any built-in stabilizers.

As one commentator has said, "Marx developed a comprehensive analysis of the category of capital and of capitalist accumulation in relation to the complicated and highly differentiated set of institutions which were provoked by this accumulation and which in turn accelerated it... It is this which makes *Capital* such a rich mine of sug-

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gestions for the interpretation of capitalism, even for those who are not in sympathy with [Marx]."* The process of accumulation—or growth, if you will—is internal to the economic order and does not require any outside stimulus to get it going. This is the basic message of Marxian theory, one too often overlooked by other economists.

Certainly, we must agree with Schumpeter who said that Marx's economic ideas could not be dismissed easily. Despite the enormous handicaps under which Marx worked, he was able to carve out a significant body of theory. Marx was ... "a born analyst, a man who felt impelled to do analytic work, whether he wanted to or not ...," said Schumpeter. Despite the errors and false trails, his theory cannot be blithely ignored, as is all too often done, for its numerous insights provide useful leads to an understanding of the real functioning of the economy. But to grasp these ideas requires more than a casual perusal of Vol. I. We must again agree with Schumpeter when he says that comprehending Marx demands not only a knowledge of the economics of his day (that is, Ricardo) but resigning oneself to a careful reading of the whole of *Das Kapital* and the *Theorien über den Mehrwert,* the so-called "fourth" volume (a brilliant study of the history of economic thought) as well. But how many persons are willing to undertake such an enormous task?

As a man of intellect Marx towered over most of the economists of his day. His keen analytic insight into the basic dynamics of 19th century capitalism, the law of motion, and his comprehension of the underlying realities of everyday life left most of his fellow social scientists far behind. His absolute dedication to the task as he saw it was a remarkable exhibition. That some of his concepts can no longer withstand the scrutiny of advancing knowledge, he would have been the first to concede. It is only those lacking in historical understanding and imagination who could dismiss such a figure as unimportant.

* Leo Rogin, *The Meaning and Validity of Economic Theary,* New York, 1956, p. 332 ff.

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SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR— OR THE REAL MANDARIN

Etiemble

I

In the time of the war lords and of the Koumintang, it was not so hard for leftists, even Stalinists, to write something readable about China. Your leftist went there in person, and afterwards reported frankly what he had seen in Shanghai—or even here, there, or elsewhere in China during those happy years when the banking family which, joined with Chiang Kai-shek, still considered "the interior of the four seas," that is to say, China, its private domain, and the five hundred million Chinese as its pre-destined slaves. Thus we had the *Shanghai* of Andrée Viollis and the *Secret China* of Egon Erwin Kisch, two books which one can reread after twenty years without being forced to question the favorable judgment of them one formed when they appeared. One might inflect one's judgment of certain details, at the most.

But ever since Mao Tse-tung became President Mao, and our Stalinists began making pilgrimages to Tien Ngan Men, the lucidity which enabled them to evaluate the old China at one glance is simply gone. How is it, for instance, that in illustrating his *Open China,* the fellow-traveler, Pierre Gascar, has set down (or allowed someone else to insert this for him) the legend represented by the photo on page 48: A grandmother holding a child in her arms: "Two faces of China: one lined with the fatigue of ages, the other, bursting with health and testifying to a new young life which, with clenched fists, affirms itself . . ." Rather than the stigmata of the fatigue of ages, the lines I see on the face of the grandmother are precisely the ones one can expect on a woman her age; and I should like to know in what country of the world infants of this age do not curl their fingers into fists.

In defense of our travelers, in China, Stalinist or otherwise, it might be argued that they are simply at the mercy of their informers. Yet neither Andrée Viollis, nor Egon Erwin Kisch spoke Chinese. But if only our new tourists would abstain from peddling their ideas about the Chinese language! For Mr. Adalbert de Segonzac, Chinese is the only

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language "which does not allow one to discover the general meaning of a conversation: because of its intonations, it is impossible, for anyone who does not understand it, to define the end of a phrase or to recognize an interrogaiton." *(Visa to Peking.)* He concludes that one ought to Romanize this perverse tongue. From its surprising character, Mr. Gascar draws a subtle effect: "it is a language which phonetically often resembles hesitant speach, a stumbling speech which lacks the tone of affirmation and which is most discomforting to the traveler debarking in Peking in 1954." What kind of whoring is this? Can anyone who knows the iron laws under which the Chinese lived in 1954 and the dogmatism then reigning everywhere, which tolerated nothing but certitudes ("we were beasts, robots" a scientist told me, when able to breathe two years later), can anyone who knows the facts accept the judgment of Mr. Gascar? It is all the less acceptable since it follows from an error about the nature of the language.

But if only this ignorance of Chinese had led our lovers of progress to be more careful in their judgments! The thought has not occurred to them.

FRENCHMEN TODAY, tens of thousands of them, have discovered China through Mr. Claude Roy (I happen to know what cultivated Chinese think of him); tens of thousands are going to read *The Long March* because this wearisome trek was authored by the winner of a Goncourt prize, the writer of *The Second Sex*.

By a strange effect of ballistics, the law governing which I certainly would like to be able to formulate once and for all, the mud of *The Long March* only bespatters those persons who have never compromised—and never will, no matter what medals are offered them —with tyranny.

In fact, what is the long march really? Is it a sort of *China Day by Day*? A book of notes taken while traveling, reportage? By no means. "The reporter explores a stable present, whose more or less contingent elements serve each other as keys." Thus you are to understand that an existentialist thinkeress, who takes this role of hers with such seriousness—it never strikes her that she bores us—could scarcely limit herself to exploring the present far from stable state of China, all of whose elements are promoted to the dignity of necessary components. Having thus motivated her modesty, Madame de Beauvoir proposes *to make clear in the light of the China of yesterday* all the information she was able to pick up there. Rather than a metaphysically impossible reportage, what she offers us is an essay on China.

Let us hail such courage. Mme. de Beauvoir ventures only timidly beyond the three Manchu centuries and those Ming periods which towards the end of the 15th century, followed the Mongol conquerers. I do not know whether in the course of her journey she studied the Neolithic sites, examined the carved bones of Ngan Yang, visited the

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tombs of Han, or handled some objects of the Fighting Realms. The few things that she wrote about Tang or Sung would be enough to break the heart of a cultivated Chinese.

This briefly is the position of our neo-sinologist: the Chinese future about which as an existentialist thinkeress I can say nothing, I shall nevertheless explain to you by means of the Chinese past about which, being Simone de Beauvoir, I know very little. Example, page 387 (the French text), about the frescoes of Touen Houang: "the artistic value of these works is not extraordinary, but all epochs of this civilization have left traces in them." In one sentence two howlers! One concerns the judgment of fact, the other the judgment of value.

II

Despite the many mistakes with which Mme. de Beauvoir motivates her scorn for Chinese culture and her hope for a country soon to be peopled with displaced illiterates, a country which only geographers could still call China, it does happen that once in a while she makes some judgment I can approve. While I doubt that in the place of the Communists "any regime would act as they do"—I do think, as many other people who are a little better informed than Mme. de Beauvoir, that today, things being as they are in Asia, only the Communists are ready to lift China from the mud, poverty and degradation which the imperialisms of the West forced it to wallow in, for the benefit of a dynasty of bankers. No, certainly "China is not a paradise; she will have to become richer and more liberal; but if one considers with impartiality what she is leaving and to what she is going," one can hardly argue against the view that the present dictatorship is for the people at least by far the least bad of all those, military, civilian or Manchu, it has suffered under for a century. There is another page in *The Long March* which I can applaud: "I am particularly irritated by the a priori benevolence which leads certain travelers to admire in an absolute way achievements which make sense only in the light of what they will become. It is not true that a Chinese village is richer or more comfortable than a French; what is remarkable is the progress it shows with respect to what it was. It is false to say that the Chinese woman is generally speaking the most emancipated in the world. It is naive to marvel at the fact that the Archbishop of Peking openly approves the regime. If he opposed it, he would no longer be archbishop. This kind of enthusiasm shocks me not only because of the errors it leads to, but also because China deserves to be recognized for what it is; not to see the difficulty it faces, is to understimate its efforts. I suspect that the propaganda of these zealots will work against them." What a pity that ideas so banal though true still do not prevent Mme. De Beauvoir from falling victim to the very error she has condemned.

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After having evoked in idyllic terms the public park that has been made of the former imperial park of Peking—pioneers, canoeists and picnickers—why does she feel forced to add that in France there is nothing more "depressing than a public park." Capitalist or socialist, a ball is a ball, a picnic a picnic, a fair a fair.

The zealotism of Mme. de Beauvoir is even less excusable when she rails against the homosexuality which stained feudal China. In condemning 'the puerile and complicated eroticism depicted in the old novels, and the vogue of homosexuality," Simone de Beauvoir must feel that she has uncovered in these some vice of thought: the refinements of Chinese eroticism scarcely camouflaged "the monotony of a civilization limited to immanence." Surely these are big enough words to make a little brain reel, but I would have preferred if instead of vaguely referring to old novels, which she could not have read in their entirety (for they do not exist in any language accessible to her in any edition that I know of) I would have preferred, I repeat, if she had consulted the serious works which treat this subject. I should also like to know why the famous author of the pages in *The Second Sex*, devoted to the glory of Lesbos, and of the article on Sade, should suddenly play the conformist. Out of philosophical scruple? Because she has discovered in Sade what Jean-Paul Sartre has found in Genet, a man who "freely assuming" the given, "avoids being bad by *making* himself such," a man who is "entirely committed" to the problem which haunts us: "the real relation of man to man?" But if she only studied Chinese eroticism a bit, she would discover that it is no less thought out, no less "freely assumed" than that of the divine marquis. The truth is that Chinese eroticism treats both saphism and pederasty with a wise indulgence, advocates neither sadism nor masochism, and, faithful to the philosophical logic of Yin-Yang, does not reject with disgust even those tricks of feminine sexuality which can result in death. I see nothing "puerile" in this; and if Mme. De Beauvoir insists on regarding as "puerile" the compression of the spermatic canal so familiar to Taoists anxious to conserve their *Yang* principle, I can only assure her that our own adolescence is no less "puerile." Is Mme. Beauvoir's denigration of Chinese eroticism really necessary for the defense of socialism?

Her zealotism becomes really intolerable when she writes that Peking "gives a perfect image of a society without classes. Impossible to distinguish an intellectual from a worker, a poor housewife from a capitalist." I will freely grant that at the time she crossed China, everybody was dressed in "the classic outfit of blue cotton cloth," and that in 1957, when I myself was in Peking and elsewhere in China, the degree of uniformity everywhere bordered on the fantastic. But one should add this: the quality of the cloth, its shade, the cut of the vest, the fit of the trousers were able to inform one at a glance of the social position of the wearer. Admitted that I am

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perhaps a little too sensitive to elegance; but the fact is that many of my companions not so sensitive reacted as I did. It is true that I never saw in Peking a single man whose refinement of dress equalled that of the Chinese diplomats we entertain in Berne; certainly, a street in Peking does not exhibit the variety still surviving somehow or other in Shanghai; but, to say that a poor housewife differs in no way from a capitalist, one has to have gone over once and for all to the side of pious mendacity.

The zealotism borders on baseness when Mme. de Beauvoir dares affirm that "on the whole, the richest Chinese lead a life almost as simple as that of the poor. First of all, they do not dare make a show of their wealth for to do so would be to excite severe criticisms, and many disdain to do so quite spontaneously. Moreover, there are few privileges that can be bought with money today. Autos are working tools. There are no pleasure spots. Going to the theatre or a restaurant, eating well, wearing fine silk clothes, buying fixtures, furnishings, nicknacks: this is the maximum luxury possible today. Besides, the inequalities inherent in capitalism are being made to disappear rapidly... the best paid are those who work hardest..." I visited Kouo Mo-jo, who has his own house and Pa Kin, whose vast home is surrounded by a carefully kept garden; also Fong Yeou-lan in the villa which the University of Pei Ta gave him; also other teachers and responsible Communists, among them an old militant who for years led a clandestine life and who showed us with a joy I well understand the well furnished rooms and quite modern comfort that had finally been granted him. To be sure, all these men have a right to live and work in quarters better than a mudhut or even the model apartment of a working class family! But neither Kouo Mo-jo, with his shining face, nor Pa Kin, with that independence of judgment I know him to have, nor Fong Yeou-lan, who knows by heart the chapter on the proper conduct for a man of letters, nor the old and courageous militant of whom I spoke above, ever gave me to understand that they "lead a life almost as simple as the poor."

To be sure, if one were to divy-up among the six hundred million Chinese the 150 exquisite ducks which every Sunday are served up in special restaurants, if one were to divide equally among everybody the wealth of pigs, chickens, fish, bears' feet and sharks' lips, the poor would be no better fed than now. That goes without saying but the fact is that nowhere else, except perhaps in Egypt, have I had the feeling of a more unjust inequality between my own lot, let's say, so as not to speak of that of the really rich, and the lot of the poor. With my apartment, my cook, my car, with all the palaces within reach of my purse and all the nightclubs—each day of this Egyptian life I led there, I suffered from contact with the poverty which Cocteau calls "splendid" but which I felt each day I was guilty of insulting. Now in six weeks, Mme. de Beauvoir did not manage to see the atrocious condition which the rulers of China to-

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day regularly admit remains the lot of the Chinese people. As long as the leaders do not resolve by draconian measures the problem of the birthrate, I do not see how they will ever be able to feed the poor.

I must regret that in her humanitarian and progressive jargon Mme. de Beauvoir betrays a disquieting lack of leeling and imagination. So then, to eat till one bursts, and of the most delicate foods, to go to restaurants and these the best in the world, to collect works of art, and these among the most rare that exist, to dress in brocaded silk and this the most expensive to be had—is that what it means to lead a simple life in China? "Almost as simple" as that of the five hundred million poor! What servility she shows in pretending that this survival of a somewhat less simple life is a vestige of capitalism! The fact is I myself did not meet a single capitalist—only bureaucrats, artists and writers—and I had the same feeling in Peking that I had in Moscow in 1934—and in 1947: in every regime, no matter how Stalinist, no matter how Communist, there is a privileged class, or if you prefer another word, caste. The lives of those who belong to this caste—in Peking as in Moscow—have nothing in common with those led by the workers. I do not see very well how this scandalous fact can be blinked at. Have I myself a right to give myself a better conscience by affirming that by living as a bourgeois in a capitalist country, I lead a life "almost as simple as the poor?" At the risk of being considered a fascistic mandarin by our gracious Lady Beauvoir, I admit that the words *poor* and *destitute* are for me full of painful meaning.

IN THE PEJORATIVE SENSE of the term, only he can be called a mandarin who chooses to further the interests of the prince rather than those of the people, who puts profit or fame above truth. Something more is required of a person than ignorance of Chinese if he—or she—is to escape the just charge of mandarinism: one must not be afraid to displease. Among those Confucians whom Mme. de Beauvoir execrates with a feeling as profound as her ignorance, I learned once and for all the proper conduct for a man of letters: "Can one impose on a man of letters by rich gifts? Can one tempt him with pleasure, with love? Recognizing these as goods, he will not impair his virtue. The crowd may threaten him with violence, and soldiers come to arrest him. Even threatened with death, he will not change his conduct. The man of letters lives among the men of his time and reflects on those of former times. He acts in accordance with his age but in such a way that future ages will imitate him. Should he displease his contemporaries, should his superiors not elevate him, should his inferiors not praise him, should flatterers and calumniators unite to bring about his ruin, they will no doubt be able to prevail against him; but they will not be able to inflect his will. His aims are not forgetful of the sufferings of the people." Very good that! But in *The Long March,* Mme. de Beauvior does not stop forgetting the sufferings of the people and constantly betrays the truth.

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Based on ignorance and presumption, garnished equally with errors and pious lies, *The Long March* is worth exactly nothing. One final example: We are informed in it that the Western powers "have filled their museums with the treasures of Chinese art." The question is not a simple one, but there is this fact to be considered: the only country in the world which has had the cynicism to exhibit works taken by force around 1920 from the frescoes of Touen Hounag, is neither France nor the United States. Before she gives us lectures, let our mandarinist go to Leningrad and pay a visit to the Hermitage Museum. I cannot resist adding another example: According to our eminent sinologist, "2,300 Houei families in Peking follow the Moslem faith." Marvelous! Houei in Chinese, means Moslem.

I have said only a small part of what I meant to say about *The Long March,* which will continue to sell for a long time, simply because "a tale full of the crassest ignorance is as likely to excite the passions as one told with historic exactitude," as Pierre Bayle said in his *Dictionary,* which alas, we no longer read.

Among our contributors... Richard Lowenthal whose essays have been published in DISSENT before, lives in England. His articles, which are easily among the best on international affairs and politics, appear in many publications, among them the London "Observer."... Ben Seligman's articles on economics and economists have regularly enriched our pages. He too writes frequently for such other publications as "Commentary." Another article by him, "Socialism Without Marx" is scheduled for a coming issue.... Lionel Abel, poet, critic and playwright, has translated material for us before. In this issue he appears as both translator and writer. His play, "Absolam" was presented in New York (off-Broadway) last year.... Etiemble is a French literary critic, teacher and Sinologist.... Boris Souvarine's "Stalin," written in the middle-30s, was a pioneer document in the dissection of Stalinism, and remains an important political-ideological work. With a background as a leading Communist, Trotskyist and socialist, Souvarine writes frequently on Russia and Communism.... Dwight Macdonald's "Memoirs of a Revolutionist" was reviewed in our Spring issue. He was publisher and editor of "Politics" in the U.S., is today on the staff of *The New Yorker*.... William Heald teaches English and the humanities at Ohio Wesleyan... AND A CORRECTION:

Georges Ketman, author of the study of Egyptian intellectuals published in the Summer 1958 DISSENT, writes to advise that we were in error in describing him as a citizen of Israel: "I would be flattered to be one, but the fact is that I am not. I am Afghan through my father, but the passport I hold is German through my mother. I suspect that what led you into this error was the Middle European sound of my name."

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WHEN THE HUNDRED FLOWERS WITHERED

The following study documents, in rich detail, a major political fact: the upheavals which shook the Communist world in eastern Europe during the past few years had significant parallels in China. There too the demand for democracy—a demand so "simple" as to be profoundly revolutionary in a totalitarian society—found a deep response.

The material is drawn from a much fuller series of studies which have appeared in recent issues of Saturn, *a remarkably valuable magazine published in France which devotes itself to documenting the conditions of life in all totalitarian countries and is devoted to exposing political terror, concentration camps and labor camps, regardless of whether these appear behind the Iron Curtain or in Algeria. It would have been worthwhile to reprint the* Saturn *articles in their entirety, as well as the massive references appended to these articles; but this would have taken up at least an entire issue of* DISSENT. *We therefore asked Mr. Michael Walzer to provide a condensation, and are sure that our readers will be as grateful to him as we are for his skilled presentation.*—EDITORS

The Chinese "100 Flowers" or "rectification" episode—heralded as an Asian "thaw" when it was first announced in early 1957—ended this winter with the fourth of the great purges which the Communist regime has conducted since coming to power less than a decade ago. We chronicle it here as a case study in the problems and contradictions of a totalitarian society.

When the "rectification" was first planned in the months after the Hungarian revolution, it was aimed at the Communist Party itself. Or rather, it was part of that peculiar kind of "self-criticism" by which a Communist party, without doing any harm to its general position, tries to free itself from the incumbrance of past "errors" and brutalities. But by February and March 1957 Mao and his associates had decided that it was necessary to involve the masses in this ritual: "self-criticism" was to be supplemented by friendly criticism from the people themselves, encouraged and patronized by the party. "Rectification" thus developed into what seemed to some people a genuine effort at a limited "liberalization from above"—though it was an effort forced upon the party by the growing popular discontent which accompanied the collectivization campaigns of 1956, and which was further fanned by the Hungarian revolution. In addition, of course, it was an effort to regain among the Chinese intellectuals some of the credit the regime had lost

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as a result of the Khrushchev revelations at the 20th Party Congress.

Through a "rectification of working methods" the Central Committee hoped to "fill the moat" and "knock down the walls" which divided the Communist apparatus from the masses. There was no intention, of course, of allowing the latter into the castle.

Perhaps with the Hungarian and Polish Octobers in mind, the regime turned first to the intellectuals. It was in their behalf that Mao issued his February proclamation: "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend." Even at that time, however, the rhetoric of spring was associated with the reality of winter, for Mao warned that *"words and actions can only be judged right if they tend to strengthen and not to weaken the leadership of the Communist party."* And this was but one—though the most important—of the "six criteria" which the party leader provided, and which would seem sufficiently freezing in their implications to kill all but the hardiest, most Communist of flowers.

Mao's criteria, however, became famous only later. What mattered at the moment was the response that Mao's formula found in the country. Even after the "rectification" movement had given way to the "anti-rightist" campaign, a party journalist could still exclaim, with what seems to be genuine surprise: "Writers and artists are not forbidden to sponsor publications founded on the principle of free competition among various literary and artistic forms and styles, *provided they obtain permission from the competent authorities* . . . But these people [the "rightists"] wishesd to propagate *their own theories* . . ." [emphasis added].

Once people with "their own theories" appear on the scene, Communist "rectification" becomes impossible; "liberalization from above" is soon replaced with a more traditional repression. The Chinese Communists sought to appropriate the "thaw" as a tactic of rule, while avoiding the consequences which Poland and Hungary had experienced. But in this they were not successful: opposition proved not so easy to engineer, and to control, as in unanimity. Totalitarian "liberalization" always runs the risk of seeming to be an invitation to democratic revolution, an invitation which the regime is bound to withdraw speedily. As a result, each new summons to friendly criticism is followed by a more thoroughgoing attack upon the critics.

Hesitantly at first, and then with great vigor, the Chinese intellectuals took advantage of the opportunities offered by the "thaw." Urged to join in friendly criticism of the party, they responded by attacking its most fundamental policies. It took over a month for the regime to step in and halt the flow of criticism. During that crucial month—between the announcement of the "rectification" movement in a Central Committee directive of April 27, 1957 and the beginning of the repression of all but one of the hundred schools on June 8—China experienced what one writer has called "an Hungarian incident without an armed struggle." The intellectuals turned their brief month of freedom into a long hour of truth for the Communist regime.

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I

1. *The intellectual must be a social critic.* "The relations between the party and the masses," one Chinese journalist wrote, "are exactly the same as those between a cat and a mouse." After April 27, the people were in the position of a mouse who, at the urgent request of a cat, must tell the latter everything about his behavior which he finds disagreeable. The discomforts of this situation were described by Lung Yun, a former president of Yunan province and a member of the 1956 government delegation to the Soviet Union:

> Many people speak with reserve and anxiety. Their fears are perfectly understandable. All those who have lived through the great movements [i.e. the three great purges] of the past have become like the bird that is frightened by the bow.

In the mind of Professor Fu Ying of the University of Peking, a chemist with a nation-wide reputation, the new "rectification" campaign aroused "feelings of repulsion and aversion... I immediately think, by association of ideas, of reform through labor at the Ch'ing Ho Farm." Another intellectual soberly recalled a friend who had been "clubbed to death" in one of the previous "rectifications." Such men could have no illusions about the party's new call to criticism. Some of them, one wrote, "trembled as if they were walking over thin ice." "It is heartbreaking to live in present society. The intellectuals tremble with fear more and more every day and their life is even less tranquil than under the Japanese occupation or under the rod of the Kuomintang."

Despite all this, the period of hesitation was very brief; emboldened by the favorable reaction of the people, especially of the students, and by the apparently well-meant silence of the party, the intellectuals reclaimed their traditional position as social critics:

> Educated people, [wrote Yang Yu-ching, an editor of the review *Research in Political and Juridical Sciences*] naturally tend to use their pens to criticize actual conditions, and, in fact, truly educated people are opposed to the current situation. Since ancient times, there have been many written protests against the *status quo,* and today, too, we must fight the present state of affairs. We must be kind-hearted, merciful and sympathetic men, courageous, determined and brave. As for those people who are content with singing the merits and celebrating the virtues of the Party, they do not deserve the name of men.

This reassertion of the integrity of the intellectual has been a prominent feature of the "thaw," in Poland and Hungary, as well as in China: it marks, perhaps, the conclusion of that *voluntary* career in self-abasement which individual authors, teachers, and artists have so long pursued in relation to the Communist party.

"The present conditions of literature and art are worse than they were during the Kuomintang period," wrote one Chinese intellectual. "The artistic and literary works produced under party supervision can-

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not be compared with those produced prior to the liberation," wrote another. "The party knows nothing about scientific matters." "If party organizations exist in the schools, I strongly doubt the possibility of promoting the development of scholarly work." In a totalitarian society even the demand of the individual artist or scholar to be left alone is a radical one; but to raise the question of the party's *total presence* is to raise the question of its total power.

From within the party itself, Yan Wen-tsih struck out at the supervision of the intellectuals:

> There is neither freedom of thought nor freedom of speech, either in the country or the Party. People are not free to say or think what they wish... The party's ideological leadership is like a blindfold... When the party launches a campaign everyone has to follow along. Even when one sees something go wrong, one hasn't the right to say so. This is a kind of blindfold on the mind...

From the universities, intellectuals attacked the central dogmas of party ideology, and demanded the right to think through on their own the premises of Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy:

> Everyone is in unanimous agreement, [wrote Lei Hai-tsung, an historian of Nankai University] that Marxism-Leninism must develop. Now, the fact is that Marxism-Leninism has ceased to develop. It has remained at the same point where it was in 1895, at the time of Engels' death. After 1895, Lenin and Stalin put forth some new ideas about particular matters, but they spoke chiefly about revolutionary problems... The new social science established by Marx and Engels has remained, fundamentally, in a state of stagnation since 1895. This corresponds precisely to the situation of the [Chinese] dogmatists: they are stagnant...

In a similar vein Tsien Kia-kiu, a member of the Democratic League of China, defended the "superior intellectual" and argued for free cultural exchange with the West:

> I hope an effort will be made to study and understand the ideological situation of the superior intellectual, and that we will not simply be content with party members' biased reports. The superior intellectual has his pride. He will yield to the truth, but is not to be intimidated. One may put a scholar to death, but one must not smear him; one may kill him, but not disgrace him. This is a fine tradition.
>
> The social sciences of capitalist countries should not be rejected *in toto*... In past years, unfortunately, we have rejected and reviled everything which does not come from the Soviet Union. For example, we have discarded sociology, political science, psychology and jurisprudence. This sort of isolationism is childish and perfectly absurd.

2. *The Communist party is the new ruling class.* Once the intellectuals began to speak out, they rapidly developed an extensive and radical critique. The two centers of their agitation were the uni-

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versities and the remnants of the old democratic parties—especially the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang and the Democratic League—which had once formed a non-Communist left opposition to Chiang, and which the Communist party has since allowed to eke out a marginal existence in the "people's democratic dictatorship." Intellectuals from these groups brought forward a striking confirmation of Milovan Djilas' theory of the "new class." Yang Ya-chin, who has already been quoted in favor of allowing a critical intelligentsia, was the first of them:

> The rectification movement is a movement in which party members should get up from their sedan chairs. A number of party members install themselves in sedan chairs, and set a distance between themselves and the masses. What kind of men have they shaped in the past eight years? The education they have dispensed has trained chair-carriers.

At the University of Peking—which was soon the center of student discontent—Ko Pei-chi, a lecturer at the Physical and Chemical Research Center, described the gulf between the people and the party in terms which were essentially those of class analysis. Ko was to become one of the symbolic figures of the Chinese May.

> At present, the party and the people are a hundred miles away from each other . . . And there are some who say that the standard of living has risen. For whom has it risen? For those members and officials of the party who used to drag about in down-at-the-heel shoes and who now go driving about and wear woolen uniforms.

The attack upon the party bureaucrats was carried on by other intellectuals. Thus Teng Ch'u-min of the Democratic League:

> There are some who, when they are promoted to official responsibilities, assume the air of mandarins and adopt a bureaucratic style of work. Friends whom we treated as brothers and with whom we were on an equal footing before the revolution have become distant and haughty since becoming officials . . . If we do not take an interest in human beings, if we spoil human relationships, if there is neither friendship nor humane feelings . . . then of what good are socialism and communism?

And Ch'en Ch'i-yan, an official of the Revolutionary Committee of the Kuomintang:

> A number of people who formerly were not communists have now become party members and, as a result, are aware that they are different from the masses. They consider themselves superior to the people. As the old saying goes: "As soon as they have entered the dragon's lair, their reputation is multiplied ten-fold."

Ch'en reported the continuation of the old mandarin custom of "giving posts to all one's relatives." Other critics attacked the "lordly" arrogance of party officials, the priority, favors and advantages enjoyed by the Communists, their extraordinarily rapid promotion, the sub-

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sidies they obtained without difficulty, the free medical assistance given to their families, the exceptional facilities provided for their children's education. These "new mandarins," it was charged, used the rhetoric of class struggle to protect and maintain their own special privileges.

Relations between party members and the masses, wrote Ko Pei-chi, were those of "employers to employees," of "masters to servants." Another member of the Peking University faculty warned of the consequences:

> The party is said to be withdrawing from the masses. It would be more correct to say that it is the masses that are withdrawing from the party... The party is declining rapidly... It is always armed force that prevails. To be sure, it is always possible to set up machine-guns to repress disorders, but it is to be feared that these machine-guns may one day be turned about and fired in the opposite direction.

3. *The dictatorship of the proletariat is the dictatorship of the Communist Party.* From April 1 to June 8, 1957, Chu An-ping was editor of the *Kuang Ming Jih Pao,* an organ of the democratic parties. In close collaboration with Chang Po-chun, president of the Chinese Peasants and Workers Party, and Lo Long-chi of the Democratic League, he turned the intellectuals' protest movement toward a concrete political goal: the realization of multi-party democracy. This involved a thoroughgoing attack not only on the Communist party monopoly, but also on the totalitarian identification of party and state. The theoretical basis for this attack was not developed until late in the period of the "thaw"; the men who formulated it faced the full weight of the "anti-rightist" campaign which began after June 8. They had raised what the Communist leadership apparently regarded as the most dangerous of questions.

> After the liberation, [wrote Chu An-ping] all intellectuals enthusiastically supported the party and accepted its leadership. But relations between the party and the masses have so deteriorated in recent years that they constitute a problem that most be settled at once... In my opinion the heart of the matter is the idea that the empire belongs to the party. Now it is my opinion that although the party directs the country, the country is not the party's property... In my opinion... the underlying principle of all the contradictions between the party and the non-Communists are to be found precisely in the ideological question of the Communist party's absolute and exclusive domination over China, in the idea that the party is the only master and the proprietor of all China.

Chen Hsin-Kuei, a fellow member of the Democratic League, sharpened the edge of this argument:

> The dictatorship of the proletariat is the source of bureaucratism, subjectivism and sectarianism... All sectarianism flows from the ideological question of the absolute dominion of the party, and the origin of

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this ideological question lies in the dictatorship of the proletariat. The errors committed by Stalin in the exercise of the dictatorship have proven that the system of the dictatorship of the proletariat is open to criticism. Now in actual fact, the dictatorship of the proletariat is nothing other than the dictatorship of the Communist Party.

The next step in what began to appear as a dialogue among critics—while the party looked silently, and ominously, on—was taken by Huang Hsin-ping, a teacher at a girls' high school in Tientsin:

> Since the Communist party is the instrument of the class struggle and since this class struggle is fundamentally over in our country, why cannot the leadership of the Communist Party be diminished slightly? Since the democratic parties have the right to exist and since their critical programs tend toward communism, why should they not be allowed to govern the country in turn by taking over the executive power? If the Communist party abandoned the idea of making the government a one party monopoly, if the Communist party and the various democratic parties offered their various political programs, free mass elections would soon incite the Communist parties and the democratic parties to overcome their shortcomings in order to win as many votes as possible and also to serve the people better...

The argument thus developed through an alternation of an almost "Aesopian" criticism, a frank and radical attack, and a bewildering—perhaps intentional—naïveté. But by June 8, 1957 its essentials were complete: the Chinese intellectuals had worked out a rough theoretical understandin of both the role of the Communist party and of the nature of democratic processes.

The practical demands which might have followed from this had actually been presented earlier. Leaders of the democratic parties had greeted the announced "thaw" with an immediate program. Their proposals are singularly revealing about the nature of the "democratic dictatorship." In articles of May 10 and 11, Lo Long-chi, a vice-president of the Democratic League, had urged that a national investigating committee be established to inquire into "deviations" committed during the great purges, and that a similar committee be made permanent for the review of current trials and the defense of "oppressed and persecuted persons." Until this is done, he wrote, "nobody can guarantee that frank criticism will not be punished... by attacks and reprisals." Only on the basis of such protection could political life be resumed.

A second series of proposals exposed the shadow-life to which the democratic parties have been condemned:

> And now let us take a look at the methods of carrying out what is known as the "policy of long-term co-existence and mutual supervision" between the Communist and democratic parties... Whereas the Communist party is free to expand among the mass of workers and peasants, the democratic parties may recruit their members only among intellectuals of a ripe age—most of whom are over 30 or even 40 years old! Such

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a discrepancy should be rapidly done away with, or the democratic parties will not be able to go on co-existing for very long . . .

4. *The Party has substituted itself for the state.* Since the establishment of the Communist regime in China, members of the various democratic parties have been assigned to positions in the ministries of the national government where they decorate the facade of the "democratic dictatorship." At the same time, however, actual power has been drawn out of the legal, or semi-legal, state and into the supra-legal party. The essential working of the system has been described by Lin Han-ta, a member of one of the democratic parties and seventh Vice-Minister of Education:

> . . . the Ministry of Education exists only in name and has no real authority. The Ministry of Education is kept in the dark about many questions and is given no information whatsoever. When it sends directives to its junior services, they are ignored. No directive can come into force unless published jointly by the Central Committee of the Communist party and the Council of Ministers. So what is the use of having Ministries in the Government at all? . . .

This same connection of party and state was attacked by China's Food Minister, Chang Nai-ki, a member of another of the democratic parties. He angrily denied Stalin's boast that Communists are made of "special stuff": ". . . that is not a scientific statement. It has an air of mysticism . . ." In fact, he argued, bureaucratic monopoly may also be bureaucratic incompetence:

> The Party is taking the place of the Government. That is a fact. And it becomes increasingly evident as one goes from the Central Government to the lower levels . . . Many Communists still have not acquired a sufficient grasp of the role which ought to be played by the state institutions . . . If the party organization tries to do everything on its own, then we cannot have a satisfactory administration.

A series of positive demands for the separation of state and party was elaborated by the president of the Peasants and Workers Party, Chang Po-chun. He proposed the creation of a genuine parliamentary system. Alongside the new parliament he would have established a group of planning bureaus composed jointly of Communists and democrats, along with "leading public figures" and representatives of "the people's organizations." Chang's intention seemed clear: he was struggling to combine a democratic government with the central planning authority necessary in a backward country.

5. *The people will overthrow the party.* Most of the criticism, though radical in its implications, was moderate, even cautious, in its tone. But at the University of Peking, where a large student body enthusiastically pushed the "rectification" campaign, the agitation took on a somewhat different character. At a conference organized by the

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Department of Industrial Economy, Wang Teh-chou warned the party leaders: "If the present rectification movement is not 90 per cent successful, the Communist party will fall." And Ko Pei-chi was even more menacing:

> The masses are still uneasy about the policy of "the simultaneous blossoming of many flowers and free competition among the various ideological schools." These fears show that the masses do not really have confidence in the words of the Communist party. The Party should ascribe primary importance to this and give the matter particular attention, for no regime can hold out without the confidence of the people. I want to repeat once again: if you, the members of the Party, do not mend your ways, the masses will overthrow the Party and kill the Communists. If you do not make every effort to mend your ways, if you continue to degenerate, if you persist in corruption and rot, sooner or later the people will overthrow the Party and kill the Communists. This possibility is in perfect agreement with the law of socialist development.

"The students of the People's University of China, at Peking, gave a warm welcome to the remarks made by Ko Pei-chi," a Chinese journalist declared a few days later, "because he has the support of the vast majority of university students."

II

On May 19, 1957 a poster denouncing the Communist Youth League appeared on the wall of the student canteen at the University of Peking. The same day a second poster appeared beside the first; drawn up by a group of philosophy students, it urged the student body to turn the wall into a "garden of democracy." This was the answer to an effort by the party to postpone student participation in the "rectification" campaign until the summer holidays, until, that is, the student community had broken up for vacation. A Chinese journalist has described the next few days:

> The appeal met with an enthusiastic reception among the student body and posters began coming in from all sides, gradually covering the canteen wall. Many students felt they have found a way of speaking freely, and suddenly it was as though they were breathing the air of democracy . . . However, on the evening of May 19, during a Communist Youth meeting, Mr. Tsuei Hsiung-koun, under-secretary of the Party Committee, declared that "though it was not forbidden to stick up posters, this was not a good way to develop the rectification campaign." These words aroused the hostility of a great many students present.
>
> The next morning they went right ahead sticking posters on the canteen wall and on walls in their residence halls. These new posters were of different colors: red, green and so forth. And they were of various kinds: violently critical articles, snappy comments, poems written in the style of Mayakovsky, biting slogans, satirical verses or caricatures.

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On the evening of May 20 the Party Committee backed down and "permitted" the continuation of the "democratic wall." Then the students pressed further:

> At this point they began to hold group discussions; some were held on the spur of the moment; others were organized in advance. The yard in front of the canteen looked just like Hyde Park: thousands of students attended debates and heard one orator after another. The Student Association announced that every evening from 5 to 10 p.m. would be a discussion period; two class-rooms were set aside for meetings and loud-speakers installed . . .

At one of these meetings on the grounds in front of the canteen Miss Lin Hsi-ling, a fourth-year student at the law school, with four years in the Red Army to her credit also, launched a dramatic attack on the party. In the midst of her speech several students tried to interrupt, but others shouted their approval and begged her to go on. It was one of the high moments of the Chinese May.

> *True socialism is highly democratic, but the socialism we have before us is not democratic. To my mind it is a form of socialism based on feudalism . . . We should not be satisfied with the Party's rectification campaign, with paltry reforms and the scant concessions made to the people . . . We must find genuine solutions to our problems and master our difficulties, and the only way to do this is to rouse and mobilize the people!*
> *Neither China nor the Soviet Union has yet done away with class distinctions. Both these countries exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat. Socialism is the elimination of classes. Neither China nor the Soviet Union is a truly socialist country. We must strive to achieve true socialism. I propose that drastic steps be taken to revolutionize completely the existing social system. I do not approve of reformism. What we need is a drastic change, a complete transformation . . .*
> *During the campaign to eliminate counter-revolutionaries, 720,000 persons were unjustly convicted . . .*
> *In China, there is no freedom of the press . . .*
> *The Communist Party has replaced the government . . .*
> *Our country has no legal system . . .*
> *In 1956 I went from Peking to Yumen and saw workers' strikes with my own eyes.*

Peking University soon became a focus of student agitation. Clubs were organized with names reminiscent of the Polish "thaw": The Society of a Hundred Flowers, The Bitter Remedy, The Voice of the Lower Class, The Free Tribunal. A group of students published a bulletin called *Public Square* and drew up a fourteen-point declaration of principles:

> Let us fight for freedom of the press. [It] will enable us to expound such ideas as will make the conservative forces retreat under the pres-

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> sure of public opinion. Let us fight for democratic socialism. The censorship of books and periodicals must be abolished. Private citizens must be allowed to found newspapers; otherwise there can be no solid guarantee that divergent schools of ideological thought will be able to compete freely... In order to fulfill a program such as this our group must become the guiding nucleus of the masses now in motion.

The proposals of these new student clubs revealed the close connection of the growing student movement with that of the older intellectuals. Many of the posters on the "democratic wall" endorsed the angry words of Ko Pei-chi, while others urged the enactment of the practical suggestions of Lo Long-chi.

By late May student discontent was growing rapidly. Now it spread to universities, colleges, institutes, and secondary schools throughout the country: from Peking to Tientsin, Shanghai, Sian, Nanking, Harbin, Hankow, Chungking, Shenyang, Hanyang, etc. The students formed clubs and associations and held meetings; periodicals and posters free of Communist censorship were circulated everywhere. Other "democratic walls" were soon covered with slogans, caricatures, posters, and declarations. Arguments ended in street fights and the number of demonstrations began to multiply. In some places the students went in for direct street action. In Hanyang, for example, more than eight hundred students organized a strike, held street demonstrations, handed out tracts, shouted slogans, and finally sacked the offices of the Communist party.

From Shenyang, where a cluster of technical schools surround a large Teachers' Training College, came the clearest formulation of the ideas and aspirations of China's intellectuals and students. It was drafted late in the period of the "thaw" by Chang Po-cheng, assistant director of the Teachers' College Propaganda Department, and Hwang Chen-lu, editor of the college review. The joint declaration was one of the few "thaw" documents which offered a thoroughgoing critique of the methods and results of communist collectivization:

> It is not true that all the peasants joined the co-operatives willingly. In fact the majority were forced to join. This explains why the personnel of co-operatives are inadequately trained and mediocre, why they operate in the midst of confusion and disorder, why they are so overstaffed, why their members seem so little eager to work.

The Shenyang declaration went on to provide a brilliant summation of the ideology of the Chinese May:

> Our main problem is how to get rid of the absolute, totalitarian dictatorship of the Communist party... For history has taught us that the rise of a privileged class infallibly and inevitably produces insurmountable contradictions... And especially during the past two years, the Communist party [has] set itself up as a privileged class, considered itself above the masses, vaunted its grandeur, power, glory and righteousness...

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More and more people have joined the Party for selfish reasons. They become Party members because for them the Party is the path to honors, influence, power and money... Once inside the Party they become more and more arrogant... They lecture and reprimand others, watch over them, spy on them and run to make their report...

When Party privileges have been abolished then and only then will genuine communists join the Party...

In the years that followed the Liberation, China did not become a socialist democracy. We have nothing but the mere shadow of a democracy, even by comparison with the pseudo-democracy of capitalist countries.

The constitution of the People's Republic of China is a scrap of paper: the Party can observe it or not just as it likes. ... Nor is there any democracy within the Party itself... The freedom Party members are supposed to have to criticize the work of the Central Committee is an empty sham, since in actual practice the conditions which would enable them to criticize the Committee do not exist.

The rights of public meeting, association and publication are purely fictitious, existing only in the text of the constitution. In actual fact a citizen has no alternative but to be a docile subject, or, to put it more bluntly, a slave.

If we really want to change this state of affairs, we must not only get rid of the Party's totalitarian dictatorship, but must also put the electoral campaign system into actual practise. The people must be given free rein to organize new political parties and new clubs, and to publish magazines which reflect actual public opinion...

The call to a second revolution is clearly contained in the Shanyang statement, which appeared just before the government crack-down. The student movement, spreading rapidly through the universities, had not only given body to the agitation of the intellectuals, but had brought forth its clearest and most resolute manifesto. "We in China," the vice-president of the University of Tsinghwa warned, "are on the brink of a 'Polish incident' or an 'Hungarian incident.'" Whatever exaggeration this statement may contain, it describes the achievement of the student movement—and explains the hasty intervention of the party. Totalitarian control was threatened; it is difficult to see what other outcome liberalization can have.

III

Throughout the period of the "thaw" the attitude of the party was confused. Some of its journals tried to erect a "wall of silence" around the spreading student movement. Others printed amazingly varied samples of the attacks upon the regime, without ever disputing them. This situation suddenly changed on June 8 with the appearance of an important editorial in the official *Jen Min Jih Pao*. After that date, no further criticism was printed; the counter-offensive of the party had begun. The criticism of the intellectuals and students was rejected on

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all fundamental points, and a campaign was launched against all opponents of the regime; these were now designated "rightists," a category which came to include many outstanding leaders of the democratic parties. In addition "anti-party" activities were uncovered within the ranks of the CP itself.

After June 8 not a single day passed without full-scale attacks on the "rightists." The press was full of the new campaign; members of the democratic parties were dragged forward to denounce their fellows; "spontaneous" demonstrations took place in factories throughout China; resolutions were adopted in government offices and in schools. All the forces which a totalitarian regime can muster were pressed into the new "mass campaign"; the flow of denunciations soon began.

On June 9 the *Jen Min Jih Pao* editorial summed up the party's attitude toward its critics. Criticism, it proclaimed, was of two sorts: well-intentioned and ill-intentioned. The former "can be completely wrong or not entirely so"; the latter "is absolutely opposed to the interests of the people..." The editorial of June 11 pointed to the students as potential critics of the communist regime: "These rightist elements thought they could take advantage of the lack of social experience of young students and thus find allies among the mass of students." Such an effort, the editorial went on, is "doomed to a shameful defeat." Finally, on June 21, in a special article by Mme. Sun Yat-sen, the essential point was made: "liberalization from above" could not endanger the party which was "above."

In his June 26th "Report on the Work of the Government," Chou En-lai devoted himself almost exclusively to refuting the criticisms which had been directed against the party. Every refutation had the tone of a warning:

> The splendid results achieved during our first five-year plan are irrefutable realities. Those who claim that this plan has been spoiled are adopting an attitude hostile to socialism and are deliberately seeking to deny the results achieved by the hard work of the entire people.

Chou's reaction to the students' movement was frighteningly simple:

> Judging from what was recently revealed during the rectification campaign, it is clearly necessary that particular attention be given to the intensification of political and ideological education in the schools.

Like Mme. Sun Yat-sen, the Communist prime minister stated clearly what was at stake:

> These rightist elements have adopted the point of view of bouregois democracy... They have slandered the democratic dictatorship, describing it as the source of all errors and all shortcomings... What they really wanted was to remove state power from the vanguard... the Communist party.

By July 1 the editorialist of the *Jen Min Jih Pao* was ready to announce that the hundred flowers promise had really been a lure for

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bourgeois weeds: "[The enemy] had first to be exposed, and it was only by allowing the poisonous weeds to appear on the ground that they could be extirpated... There are some who call this a dark machination, but we reply that it was very clear." The full weight of the "mass campaign" was now brought against the few men who were to be compelled to offer public confession.

A member of the Democratic League, Wu Han, played the role of chief accuser. Chu An-ping, he declared, had "venomously slandered" the Communist party. Lo Long-chi had demonstrated a "lack of confidence" in the Party. Chang Po-chun had revealed himself "dissatisfied with the leadership of the Communist party." And so on: the accusations were intoned as preparation for a ritualistic slaughter. Only once was Wu revealing:

> The alliance between Chang Po-chun and Lo Long-chi was formed on the heels of the twentieth Congress of the CPSU. After the events in Hungary, they felt that the Communist party could no longer continue to direct the country and that the time for the democratic parties had come.

As early as June 10—barely two days after the "anti-rightist" campaign was announced—Chang Po-chun had offered his first confession. It lacked, however, that quality of totally abject self-humiliation which the regime required—though it was abject enough:

> It is possible that my opinions may be serious mistakes that constitute a form of resistance to the leadership of the Communist party... it is also possible that they are not so serious... It may be that I did not make myself clear. I do not want to argue in my favor... The criticisms of me that were made by persons in all walks of life greatly surprised me; I must wake up as quickly as possible and correct my errors; furthermore, I sincerely thank the comrades who have helped me...

During the next month the attacks on Chang did not abate; one by one his friends and colleagues repudiated their "errors" and condemned each other. On July 15 Chang issued a definitive confession; it is worth quoting at length, and may serve as an epilogue to the Chinese "thaw":

> My erroneous ideology and faulty actions have historical roots... I come from the landowner class. For a long time I was influenced by feudal ideology and the bourgeois education that I received. In 1927, after rejecting the glorious Chinese Communist party, I became one of the important middle-of-the-roaders—30 per cent anti-communist and 70 per cent anti-Chiang Kai-shek—.... I specialized in opportunistic activities in the political and military spheres... On July 1, 1951, the 30th anniversary of the glorious, great and correct Chinese Communist party, I published my self-criticism under the title: "The Communist Party Saved Me." I expressed my repentance therein, but I had not yet completely extirpated the roots of my evil thoughts... And these

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latent evil thoughts rose up again in 1956 following the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU . . . I criticized Stalin excessively and venomously . . . I even went so far as to deal lightly with the fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism . . . [At] this year's session of the Political Conference, I declared "I love socialism, I also love democracy." Obviously, it was an error on my part to regard socialism and democracy as incompatible . . . I was of the erroneous opinion that if we added scientific techniques and "democracy" to socialism, life in our country would be more perfect . . .

The people of the entire country have demanded that I be strictly treated as a rightist. I accept this treatment. I loathe my abominations. I wish to eliminate completely my old reactionary "self" so that it will never reappear. I wish to participate with the people . . . in the intensive fight against the rightists, including the fight against myself. The great Chinese Communist party saved me in the past. It is saving me again today. I hope that, led and educated by the Party and Chairman Mao, I will be able to start a new life and once again love the Party . . .

The July 1 editorial of the *Jen Min Jih Pao* had declared that there was no need to punish the "rightists" unless they persisted in their errors: "the people's state is very stable." Yet the confessions seem not to have been considered entirely adequate, for on August 4 the Council of Ministers adopted a series of important decisions concerning "the question of education through labor." Subsequently, the "rightist" ministers were dismissed from their posts or reduced to minor clerical positions, though the repression, at least on the top levels, did not take the form of bloodshed or imprisonment.

What the long-range consequences of the Chinese May will be, remains to be seen. For the time being at least, one thing is clear: there will be no more flowers.

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A POINT OF HISTORY

Boris Souvarine

The celebrated episode of the trip of the "Bolshevik leaders" across Germany within a "sealed train" has caused as much ink to run as the accusation of being in the pay of the Kaiser, examined below.

But the episode is as famous as deformed; focusing on it then will not be useless at a time when some brassy publications abuse the credulity of the public and propagate the most vulgar historical popularizations under the false pretext of revealing something new about the Russian Revolution.*

The "sealed train," more readily designated the "leaded car," often turned into the "armored train" [*sic*] has never involved the least mystery and does not offer a subject for any so-called revelations. A phrase of Ludendorff cited a thousand times, very vague and written after the event, does not prove any connivance between Germany and the travelers in the railway car: "In sending Lenin to Russia, our government assumed a heavy responsibility, but it was justified from a military point of view, for it was neces-

NOTE: This article is reprinted, with the permission of the author and publishers, from *Le Contrat Social*, March 1958. We offer it as particularly interesting in the light of the recently published, and highly touted, *The Russian Revolution* by Alan Moorehead—a Book-of-the-Month selection described by the reviewers of the *New York Times* as the "most readable work yet written on the subject." The same reviewer also notes that Mr. Moorehead neither reads nor speaks Russian but that he had access to "hitherto unknown" material gathered by Prof. Stephen T. Possony of Georgetown University under a grant from Pennsylvania University and the magazine *Life*. Life made a big splash of this material some months ago. Boris Souvarine discusses these revelations, which apparently form an important part of Mr. Moorehead's "most readable" work.

* The brassy articles in *Life*, weekly illustrated American magazine, reprinted in England, in France, and elsewhere in those journals which are not distinguished either by seriousness or by competence, truly do no honor to the Western press. They reveal themselves as the "condensation" of a book done hastily by a journalist somehow spoken of as a "popular historian" but who is rather a novelist-pamphleteer, with the cooperation of an "international team of scholars" [sic] who have, essentially, compiled at third or fourth hand their commonplaces from several books chosen at random. This compilation "dramatized," according to the American expression, is claimed to have required (*Life*, March 17, p. 37) a year and a half of work for this same team; it does not matter that a writer with a facile pen could have done much better all alone in six weeks in a good library. One would blush to reprint the assertions ventured in order to announce the French version where the author becomes "the journalist who devoted ten years of his life to this study." Let it suffice to note sadly that these "morals of the dailies," singularly made worse since Marcel Schwob, only serve the Communist cause. On the other hand, *La Pensée Russe*, a magazine published in Paris, has devoted to the trip of Lenin across Germany an entire page, of which the least that one can say is that it is worthy of a press which respects itself.

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sary at all costs to hasten the defeat of Russia" (General Ludendorff: *Souvenirs de guerre*). Later, Ludendorff wrote that he had "no ideas about Lenin or Kienthal" and that he was restricted "to follow solely the directions of the government" (letter to R. Fester, 20 October 1937). General von Hoffman in *The War of Lost Opportunities,* justified also as a "propaganda weapon" what he believed, wrongly, to be German initiative.

In fact, it is not true that the German government (some say the staff, others, the Kaiser) "sent" Lenin and his comrades to Russia, and it is false that Lenin had concluded a political pact (*do ut des*) with German imperialism, as so many authors repeat without knowing the facts. The truth, known at the time, suffices in itself and the legend does not serve in any way the criticism of the Bolshevism.

Soon after the fall of Czarism, the question of the return to Russia was posed for political émigrés of all shades; among them, "social-patriots" and "defensists" were much more numerous than the small Leninist group. The British authorities refused to Russians living in Switzerland authorization to pass through England. A committee for the evacuation of the émigrés, brought together in Zurich, and where 23 groups of different political labels were represented, unanimously took note of the English government's refusal to let the Russian socialists enter their country. On March 19, 1917, in Geneva, a meeting was held in which there participated Natanson-Bobrov (representing the Socialists), L. Martov (the Mensheviks), G. Zinoviev (the Bolsheviks), Kossovski (the Bund), and it was then that Martov suggested that passage through Germany be negotiated in exchange for the Germans and Austrians interned within Russia. This plan was unanimously adopted.

The initiative came then from Martov, spokesman of the Menshevik-internationalists, adversary of the Bolsheviks, and not from Lenin, and not from Berlin. The fact cannot be contested and it reduces to nonsense all the talk that has made the rounds with respect to the so-called political accord between Lenin and Germany.

As ALWAYS in similar circumstances, some objections arise when theory passes into practice; the émigrés discussed endlessly what people would say, the advantages and disadvantages, the precautions to take, etc. Meanwhile Lenin, with his decisive spirit, rallied directly to Martov's plan and endeavored to turn words into acts. It did not matter how, moreover.

He considered successively several unrealizable plans: to procure a passport of a Swedish deaf-mute, to pass across the frontiers with some smugglers, etc. Between March 21 and 23, he telegraphed to his comrade V. Karpinski:

> Martov's plan is good: it is necessary to support it, but *we* (and you) cannot do it directly. *We* will be suspected. It is necessary that besides Martov, some disinterested Russians and some Russian patriots speak to the Swiss ministers (and to some influential people, some lawyers, etc., all that one can do in Geneva) and ask them to discuss the matter with the German ambassador in Berne. We cannot participate either directly or indirectly; our participation would *spoil* everything. But the plan in itself is *very* good and *very* just.

On March 28, Lenin telegraphed to J. Ganetski, a Stockholm business man in his confidence:

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> An authorization from Berlin is unacceptable to me. Or that the Swiss government will obtain a car up to Copenhagen, or that the Russian government will negotiate the exchange of all the émigrés for the interned Germans.

On March 30, a new telegram from Lenin to Ganetski:

> Your plan is unacceptable. England will not let me pass, interns me rather. Miliukov will deceive. Only hope: send someone to Petrograd; obtain from the Soviet of worker delegates the exchange for the interned Germans.

These authentic texts make it clear that Ganetski, whose own telegrams are not available, inquired in several places in order to find a solution and was by no means the German agent whom so many people have thoughtlessly accused him to be. However, Robert Grimm, Swiss socialist delegate, took some measures that did not progress quickly, on behalf of the Russians impatient to leave. On March 31, Lenin sent him a pressing telegram. The same day, the Bolshevik group adopted a resolution stating that "the proposition of R. Grimm is fully acceptable since it guarantees the liberty of independent passage of the political partisans" and that "the proposition is founded on the plan of an exchange of Russian émigrés for the Germans interned in Russia."

But the resolution declared also with regret that the representatives of "certain political leanings" have agreed to defer their decision (in effect, they wished an approval from the Petrograd Soviet in order to cover themselves). As to Lenin, he was not embarrassed with so many scruples, he hastened to participate in the events. On April 5, he telegraphed to Ganetski:

> We have an incomprehensible delay. The Mensheviks require the sanction of the Soviet of worker delegates. Send someone immediately to Finland or to Petrograd in order to come to an agreement with Tchkheïdzé [president, Menshevik, of the Soviet] as soon as possible.

And as Grimm, whom he thought to be a "centrist," then suspect, did not carry out his steps with enough conviction, he had confided to Fritz Platten, another Swiss socialist, the care of concluding the matter. But on what conditions?

THESE CONDITIONS figure within a memorandum of F. Platten dated April 4 and are reproduced within other documents of the times. Essentially, they stipulate the right of *extraterritoriality* recognized for the railway car escorted by Platten who, alone, would be in contact with the German authorities, the travelers being admitted *without any distinction of political opinion* and freed from all control (which permitted K. Radek, of non-Russian nationality, to leave); the authorization of the passage was only granted by right of exchange with the prisoners or interned Germans and Austrians in Russia (Otto Bauer, notably, would be freed by virtue of this clause). That does not resemble any conniving between "Lenin and the Kaiser." In their last declarations, before setting out, the Bolsheviks repeated their irreducible hostility to German imperialism and their desire for "revolutionary war against Germany" after taking power in Russia "for the working class."

Thus Lenin and his friends had no obligation toward Germany, except that of doing everything possible to exchange an equal number of prisoners detained in Russia. On April 9, the first group of 32 persons left Swit-

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zerland, comprising 19 Bolsheviks, 6 Bundists, 3 Menshevik-internationalists. The railway car was not leaded, nor the train sealed, still less "armored." Lenin refused curtly to see any of the German Social Democrats who climbed on the train in Berlin. He repulsed with disgust the weak attempt of Parvus, the ex-socialist who had become a businessman and more or less an agent of the German government, who desired to have a talk with him. On April 16, Lenin and his traveling companions were welcomed at Petrograd by N. Tchkheidzé, president of the Soviet, and M. Skobelev, vice president, delegates of the Executive Committee; and by an immense crowd that the local Bolsheviks had gathered together. The journal of P. Miliukov (cadet, Minister of Foreign Affairs) expressed it thus: "A socialist chief as universally known as Lenin must enter into the arena, and we have no alternative but to greet his arrival in Russia, whatever our opinions about his political doctrines is."

A month later, some two hundred Russian refugees, the great majority of them Menshcviks or "social-patriots," who had disavowed the departure of Lenin as premature, lacking the approval at the Soviet, took the same road, having waited for a decision from Petrograd, which never came. This time, L. Martov was among them. Now, on their account, no one spoke of a railway car leaded, sealed, or armored. They made, moreover, the same trip, under the same conditions, neither more nor less innocent or guilty than Lenin.

The intentions of the German Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg who took the responsibility for the operation were evident, to the Bolsheviks as to everyone else. On both sides, explicit witnesses abound. On the German side, there are Generals Ludendorff and Hoffmann, the memoirs of the Social Democrat Scheidemann, a book by Parvus, etc. On the Bolshevik side, there are all the texts of Lenin (letters, telegrams, notes), the memoranda of the participants (Krupskaya, Platten, Ganetski, Shliapnikov, and others). The Germans, counting on a short-term advantage, were deceived in the long run; they only fully understood in November 1918, when a box, dispatched to Berlin by diplomatic courier, to the Soviet ambassador Joffe, burst and revealed revolutionary propaganda: relations were broken off, but too late, shortly before the collapse of the Empire. Lenin and his partisans were deceived also in counting on the defeat of all the belligerents, on the "proletarian" revolution in Germany and within all countries, and on the "world" revolution. It was the tenacity and the victory of the "Entente" which created a change of regime in Germany and annulling the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, spared the Soviet regime.

N.B. Lenin was accompanied notably by Zinoviev, Sokolnikov, Safarov and their wives, and by Radek. He had been welcomed in Stockholm by Ganetski, then at the Russian frontier by Kamenev and Shliapnikov. All these close companions of Lenin were later put to death by Stalin.

Translated by FREDERICK R. KARL

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COMMUNICATIONS

1. The Left Is Where the Heart Is

William O. Reichert

The end result of Henry Pachter's contribution to DISSENT's discussion of contemporary foreign policy [Spring, 1958] is to compound the confusion of an already chaotic situation. George Orwell once observed that the English language "becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts." At first glance, Pachter's thoughts are not altogether foolish. His analysis of contemporary diplomacy puts both Khrushchev and Dulles in their proper places and reveals Kennan as the brazen grand-stander he is. For all this, DISSENT's readers are grateful and we feel that Mr. Pachter has done us some service. Unfortunately, however, Pachter could not bring himself to leave the game while he was ahead and the final paragraphs of his essay find him hopelessly lost in a semantic maze of his own creation.

Pachter's use of the English language becomes particularly slovenly when he amuses himself in the popular pastime of attaching labels to political groups. It is not wholly clear to this reader whether his criticism of the fectly clear that he has very little sympathy for the idealistic notions of those who advocate building peace upon non-violent principles of action. The Left, he tells us, has clearly seen through the sham of power politics disguised as diplomacy but has been unable to offer any alternative of its "Left" is meant to be positive or negative. However this may be, it is per- own to the "balance of terror" as it is now maintained. At this point the reader feels compelled to raise the protest that this statement overlooks the fact that pacifists have long been shouting themselves hoarse that the world must come to its senses and end the power struggle by outlawing war. But Pachter quickly dispatches this objection to the ignominious fate he feels it deserves. The "ancient concept of outlawry," he observes, would not establish peace but would merely make legitimate the balance of power which Dulles and Khrushchev have established and hope to continue. Here the reader is likely to object, especially if he is a pacifist, that peace can never be established until man's attitude toward war has been changed, and that the outlawing of war would be a first, but important, step in this direction. But Mr. Pachter will have none of this maudlin sentimentality. The only groups he knows of on the Left which might be called radical, he says, are the unconditional pacifists, the unilateralists, and the defeatists. But, he continues, "they deny collective security and are interested in their own salvation rather than in the survival of mankind." The preservation

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of peace, according to him, is a "practical question" which has nothing to do with the peace of mind of the so-called pacifists. Pachter, it is clear, is one of those who feel that peace cannot be maintained except by employing the technique of meeting force with force. This is demonstrated by the fact that his preoccupation with practical matters leads him to extol the virtues of the professional negotiators who "have a profound understanding of collective security and the conditions under which peace can be maintained."

IF PACHTER considers himself a radical (and it is charitably assumed that he does), his radicalism is of the head rather than the heart. For one of the prime tenets of radicalism is that no political principle is acceptable if its obvious effect is to increase the level of injustice in the world. It is historically true, of course, that many radicals, acting upon the very best of intentions, have been at times guilty of unjust actions. But it may be plausibly argued that the injustice of which they were guilty was the result of mistaken judgment, the effect of which was not clearly evident to them at the time the acts were performed. Pachter cannot by any means plead ignorance as a ground for his defense, for he is well aware of the moral implications of his position. "To be morally right," he argues, "is no substitute for a [realistic] foreign policy . . ." In this age of scientific warfare, "peace goes before conscience and even before justice." History may conceivably demonstrate that the advocates of collective security have the most practical solution to the problem of existence that is humanly possible under present international conditions. But can the Left—and here Pachter's thinking seems more pernicious than slovenly—accept the Machiavellian precepts which form the basis of this position?

What Pachter does not understand is that radicalism has a definite content, and that this is stated in terms of moral right and wrong. The radical can never compromise his principles for the sake of doctrinal expediency. Nor can he consciously choose any means to implement his course of action that is unworthy of his professed ends. Radicalism is a moral attitude or it is nothing. The one factor that is common to all groups on the Left is the theory of human nature which forms the foundations of the radical point of view. Radicals, whatever their judgement of Rousseau's political ideas may be, agree with him that the evil in this world is in large measure created by social institutions and not by original sin. Reduced to its simplest terms, radicalism stands fast on the proposition that human nature is basically good. And hence it is impossible that any radical can willfully sanction war. For war, however noble its professed aims may be, is an institution which rests on an utterly hopeless view of human nature. Those who decide to wage it have obviously abandoned the hope that social progress can be brought about by any means short of violence. In choosing to take what Emanuel Geltman calls a "moral stance" toward the problem of war, radicalism may well have opened itself to a charge of impracticality. But its integrity, at least, has been preserved. Marginal radicals would do well to consult their hearts as well as their heads.

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2. Foreign Policy: a Revolutionary Alternative

William Robert Miller

It is good to see the stirrings of conscience among socialists as evinced by the Pachter and Geltman articles in the Spring DISSENT. Yet both, in separate ways, tend to be inconclusive. In this there is a recognition, keenly felt especially in Geltman's appeal to morality, of the fact that socialists are on the sidelines in this bewildering debate.

Both writers accept the alternative presented by the *realpolitik* of power politics, and each ends by getting himself impaled on one of the horns of the dilemma. Pachter observes that peace is being maintained by means of a "suspended suicide pact," and rightly charges that the Left has offered as an alternative "nothing but a bundle of suggestions from an earlier age." "To be morally right is no substitute for a foreign policy." Against his will, however, Pachter remains stuck with the balance of terror, which he is presumably content to endure until a viable alternative emerges.

On the other hand, Geltman's position is virtually identical with that of the World Council of Churches, which counseled that there are risks worth taking for the sake of peace. It is morally sound and admirable as far as it goes. But in the final analysis it is a stab in the dark which does not reckon consequences. The danger in such a view is that it takes us out on a limb of sheer hope without first transforming the dynamics of the faith by which we have, with Pachter, clung to the poisoned tree. If hope is not vindicated, back we go to hopelessness.

As long as the alternatives are posed in terms of "morality versus power," there is no realistic basis of hope. What is needed is a different set of presuppositions; and if we probe deeply enough we will find that they lie in the ethical and ultimately religious basis of our political and economic thinking.

Underlying the Marxist interpretation of history, it is generally conceded, is an implicit faith in the brotherhood of man which argues for a society of equals to make this faith explicit. Also implicit but less often conceded is a concept of love and courage as the integument and dynamic of the struggle by which the social revolution advances. These are not categories of sentiment but of profound psychological meaning, as such socialist writers as Fromm and Tillich have shown, and they have a great bearing upon theory when it is energized into policy and action.

What is ultimately lacking in both Pachter's and Geltman's analyses is the will to seek out an alternative to military police which accords with the underlying faith of socialism. One of the lessons of socialist history is that revolution and violent insurrection are not the same thing and, what is more important, the winning of a revolution hinges decisively on factors other than arms. Self-sacrificing dedication to a just cause, the loyalty of comrades, revolutionary morale, persevering faith—without these, there would never have been a Red Guard or a Red Army. It may further be noted that, as guns and external discipline were built up and the factors of love and cour-

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age declined, the Red Army became an increasingly suitable instrument of repression in the hands of the Stalinists. Military force is destructive force; it cannot be used to promote freedom without corroding freedom itself. This is generally recognized, and such force is employed not as a good thing but as an unfortunate expedient.

Like all expedients, however, the means of violence takes its toll of the end it is designed to serve. Consequently the result of corrupted means is a distorted or perverted end. The alternative must not be merely the removal of the means but its transformation into that which accords with the desired goal, so that ends and results can be harmonized.

There is a large question of ends and means that concerns the fate of socialism, and this is not the place to discuss it at length. I would mention in passing, however, that socialists have historically tended to dig their own graves by waiting for the course of history, with its recurring crises, to set the stage for action, and neglecting much spadework that needs doing in between—opportunities for kindness are deferred until the revolutionary, panacea-building hour, when socialists get support not from understanding but from sheer desperation.

The present question of means, however, is not a socialist question, yet it is not *less* than a socialist question—it is a question embedded in the same ethical soil in which socialism takes root. Socialism is necessarily anti-capitalist, because it stands for a higher kind of human relationship than is possible through the cas nexus. Parallel with this, there is a nobler way of dealing with conflict than by killing your enemy—a necessarily anti-military way which goes beyond the negation of violence to the affirmation of human dignity.

THE ANSWER, unfortunately, does not have a handy label—if I said "pacifism," I would almost inevitably be misunderstood; if I said *"satyagraha,"* or the "way of the Cross," it would call for a dictionary or a concordance. Suppose we use the term "nonviolence," and indicate that its application can range from an individual attitude to a strategy and discipline of mass action. It is a revolutionary technique geared to the recognition of the brotherhood of man, and operating on the premise that goodwill in a just cause can vanquish evil in an opponent. The most striking application of nonviolence, of course, was in the struggle for Indian independence.

Nonviolence is not guaranteed to be bloodless; it seeks to disarm the enemy not through preventing his ability to kill, but by undermining his willingness to kill. Trotsky relates an unconscious application of the technique in his *History of the Russian Revolution*—at one critical early stage in the February revolution, Cossack cavalry held formation and permitted the insurgent workers to pass unmolested through their ranks. They did not do this because they were forced to, but because they were persuaded of the moral superiority of the revolutionists' position, and this moral superiority was not obscured by armed threats but was bolstered by an evident honesty and lack of malice.

In East Berlin, in Poznan, in Budapest there were sporadic instances of the same kind of response—Soviet troops refusing to fire on demonstrators, and even in some cases turning their weapons over to them. If such results

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are obtainable accidentally, consider what might be done by a body of men equivalent to the size of the United States armed forces, trained in the morale and techniques of nonviolence.

With this kind of revolutionary alternative in mind, unilateral disarmament would not be a moral substitute for foreign policy, but a foreign policy with effective moral content. It involves considerable risk, but nothing so great as nuclear annihilation. Instead of a threat, it poses a challenge for emulation which could finally achieve the liberation of the peoples of the Soviet empire. It is not a bargain-basement solution; its success depends on moral fortitude rather than technological resources—on a creative courage instead of destructive gadgets. At this juncture of human events, confronted with what C. G. Jung has called a "moral lag" in man's thinking, it may be that we have no choice but the revolutionary alternative of non-violence.

Sooner or later it will prove to be the *sine qua non*, not only of socialism, but of survival itself.

Henry Pachter replies:

I really don't know what I am scolded for. Both communications [above] agree with my contention that socialists have no foreign policy; they even go further to say they ought to have no foreign policy. This is precisely the state of thought which I tried to describe. I said it is a luxury because it leaves no alternatives should it fail. From the writers' point of view, every attitude which is not non-violence, is presumed to "sanction war"; quite consistently, they allow no differentiation between nationalism, alliances and military outlook on the one side, and collective security on the other side. Even the adjective "realistic" which one writer surreptitiously insinuates into my sentence is nothing but a dirty epithet. I simply wish to state that collective security is the opposite of alliances and that I was asking for a foreign policy (realistic or otherwise) which would be likely to achieve this aim.

I plead guilty to thinking with my head; that's what I usually use it for. I also plead guilty to the earnest and desperate awareness of a dilemma which my heart would rather not recognize; but I hope I have made it clear at least to those readers who are not determined to misunderstand: that the present age confronts us with the choice between the unwavering pursuit of Justice and the preservation of peace. Contrary to what I and Geltman are being accused of, we are precisely searching for an alternative to military policy. But a policy presupposes the means of policy, and that means either power (coercion) or a universe of understanding. Satyagraha is a means of coercion that under certain favorable conditions will look non-violent, but is not essentially so; the use of statecraft is almost by definition not non-violent, but the challenge of this age is precisely to convert it into an instrument of co-existence. I wish—and, believe me, I wish it with my heart—that those who courageously try to face the painful dilemma of our time, would not constantly be lectured to on their morals; what gives any of us the right to be so righteous?

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BOOKS

The Hylozoic Theory of Power

ORIENTAL DESPOTISM, by Karl August Wittfogel. Yale University Press, 1957, 447 pp., $7.50.

In calling his book "a comparative study of total power," the author is doing himself justice, for the book indeed is an immense file case of characteristics which at various times have been common to many societies of oriental type. The book, however, pretends to be more—it tries to prove a theory which would explain the similarities. All these despotic governments, Wittfogel suggests, based their power on an identical service which they rendered their subjects: they organized and supervised the waterworks which assured farming; if they did not actually do it, their predecessors had, or they had learned the techniques of despotism from neighboring governments which once had been connected with the control of water supply.

To prove this contention, it will be necessary to define the control of water supply as broadly as possible. It will not suffice to evoke the huge irrigation canals or flood dikes of ancient empires which still evoke our admiration; to make the argument really comprehensive, reference must be made to the provision of drinking water, to shipping and even ocean communications. Since 90 per cent of the ancient empires were 90 per cent of the time ruled by despots and at some time at least also were dependent upon water supply, it really is not difficult to establish a statistical correlation between water and despotism. In such a case, the difficulty is not in the alleged rule, but in the contradictory exception.

How, for instance, do we explain Japanese despotism which plainly had nothing to do with water supply? We proceed in two stages; first we describe many features of a despotic government which often are found in societies which depend on water control; to recall the sum total of these features, then, we use the terms "despotic," "oriental" and "hydraulic" interchangeably. Thereupon we find most of these features in the Japanese society and triumphantly hold them up as proof that this really is an "oriental" society. To make this appear as something rather close to our "hydraulic" type of society, we use various devices, such as emphasizing Japan's cultural and political ties with the eminently "hydraulic" China, naming among the measures which a Japanese reform government took, first a decree relating to dikes, and we end with the assertion that "in a submarginal way (Japan) was related to the institutional patterns of the hydraulic world." No one can gainsay that.

WITH THIS METHOD we can go very far in proving whatever we like; it may even be susceptible of elaboration and

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of application to other fields of knowledge. For instance, starting from the observation that most birds have feathers, feet and other things in common with the species swan, we might classify all birds in terms of their relationships to the swan species. Thus, a duck would be defined a marginal swan and a chicken as a sub-marginal swan. To be sure, a number of birds would be left out of the scheme. Likewise, Wittfogel leaves out of this classification system such "hydraulic" societies as the Dutch—clearly they were neither "oriental" nor despotic; and what of the enormous draining of the marshes by the British gentry in the 17th century? On the other hand, the Roman Empire was transformed into "oriental despotism" under Diocletian without benefit of hydraulic works. There is no explanation of these anomalies in the 447 pages of the book; nor is there any serious attempt to explain why hydraulic works generated a theocracy in Egypt and a-religious mandarins in China. Dr. Wittfogel's theory is utterly unhistoric because the variety of oriental societies had to be pressed into a pre-conceived pattern, and the many useful observations on despotic government are torn from their proper context to be thrown into the basket of a general theory instead of being developed from their historical origins.

Why should a gifted and knowledgeable sociologist—once the philosopher of the German Communist party—thus have wasted his vast store of information? The reason is made clear in a brilliant and amusing chapter on the history of the theory, or rather on the misfortunes of the theory in Soviet and anti-Soviet literature. Wittfogel shows that Stalin feared the idea of an "oriental type" society which is neither capitalist nor socialist. The irony is, that this idea is based on a suggestion by Marx, elaborated by Max Weber and expounded in an earlier (German) book by Wittfogel. For obvious reasons Russian academies rejected these views and Wittfogel berates them properly for rejecting Marx. But here is a second turn of irony—Wittfogel, who now belongs to the extreme right, still cannot prove Stalin wrong without the proper Marx quotations, and he cannot submit that a theory is correct except by proving that Lenin held it. Hence unfortunately the inventory of despotic societies had to be fitted into the strait-jacket of the particular interpretation of "historical materialism" to which Wittfogel subscribes.

To make matters worse, this interpretation happens to be the most primitive of all available text-books of Marxism. It looks for a strictly "materialistic," i.e. technological explanation of history, leaving class structure, social organization, instruments of power and other relevant data to be explained by technology alone, or rather by one set of technological data above all others. The most outrageous example of this simplistic view concerns the country where a correct theory would be most desirable—Russia. How did oriental despotism come to Russia? Not out of the social structure of the country that fell under the dominion of the granddukes of Muscovy, but in the following mystical way: the Mongols who had seen it work in China, brought the memories of this form of state to the Russian plains and left these memories there for the granddukes to pick them up several hundred years later. With such a method it is possible to prove anything.

Strangely enough, no professional historian has lodged a protest in any

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learned magazine; apparently the book has been given for review not to the experts in the field but to professional anti-Communists who would praise its anti-Soviet slant. This reviewer, however, wonders whether Wittfogel has really done the good cause a good service; he seems to prove too much. If it is true, as he claims, that despotic government is natural to the East, then there is no alternative for the suppressed nations in the Soviet orbit. Can Wittfogel have failed to overcome his one-time Stalinism in his heart and in his mind? Does he still believe in the iron law of History which makes Progress in these areas dependent upon the Iron Cohort? His book is deeply defeatist. To a degenerate Marxism it opposes nothing but Marxist cretinism, and instead of a clue to the understanding of oriental societies it gives us a label. The wealth of information and a number of highly interesting ideas which have been digested into this monumental work, unfortunately are more likely to bewilder the reader than to enlighten him.

HENRY PACHTER

The Algerian Tragedy

ALGERIA: THE REALITIES, by Germaine Tillion. Alfred A. Knopf, New York. 1958. 115 pp. $2.50.

Germaine Tillion's *Algeria* is a beautifully written, but seriously flawed, book. The author, an ethnologist and a leading French authority on the sociology of Algeria, has put together this study of the Algerian reality with a precision and firmness hard to surpass. Mlle. Tillion *knows* what she is talking about; further, her presentation is as sure as her grasp.

Her thesis is a simple one: Between France and Algeria there is a two-way current of dependence, an "objective interdependence" as she wrote earlier (*Encounter*, July, 1958). Two more mutually linked communities would be hard to imagine. Yet each can destroy —and are—the other; the author cites the example of North American male deer and bucks who, when fighting, frequently interlock their antlers and die together, "snout to snout."

More concretely, there are 400,000 Algerian workers who have immigrated to work in France; a minimum of 2,000,000 of their countrymen depend primarily on the money order remittances these industrial workers send home each month in order to eat; by the same token, of the 1,200,000 non-Moslems living in Algeria, we can eliminate perhaps 100,000 who are "colons" (settlers) or of their milieu. This leaves a balance of over one million non-Moslems who are skilled workers, government officials, white collar employees, taxi drivers, service managers, small merchants, laborers etc. Economically, they represent more than three-fourths of the country's economic structure which is to say their future lies with the development of Moslem economic health.

Mlle. Tillion analyzes in sharp strokes the origins of the current disaster. In essence, it is the now familiar story of 19th century imperialism uprooting and tearing apart the fabric of an

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archaic, yet fairly stable and harmonious order of life. A ruthless cycle begins: hopeless indebtedness of the peasant; unprecedented increase in population; dwindling of resources; destruction of native craft industries by foreign techniques, etc. Algeria was particularly vulnerable:

> Weeks of work and seven fleeces are needed for the weaving of a *burnous,* and each fleece is worth between five hundred and a thousand francs. It is ridiculous for people who eat meat only four times a year to spend all that time and money on a garment when for next to nothing they can get a hand-me-down that may be seedy but will at any rate keep out the cold. It is the same wherever you look, and so in every field the seedy and the sordid are . . . replacing the splendid survivals of the past.

So much for what Mlle. Tillion splendidly calls in an untranslatable world, the "clochardisation" (literally, bum-ification) of Algeria; I have never read such a terse yet brilliant analysis of the degradation and pauperization so characteristic of the Arab lands.

This is the background of the nationalist revolt; the French presence in Algeria sped the social disintegration of this unfortunate people on its way until... In Europe, France, even in the Communist bloc, there has been a steady and regular improvement in life, but "two thirds of the Algerian people have experienced a fate the direct contrary...." What does the fellagha who fights believe?

> "It'll be the end of the bad times" they say, and they mean work, schools, houses, clean and hard-working wives, money, land, and bread.

This leads us, of course, to the question of politics; the issue of independence. Mlle. Tillion loses her precision and grasp at this point, unfortunately. It is difficult not to agree with her that the gaining of independence, *tout court,* i.e., "independence" brought about by an abrupt withdrawal and abandonment of Algeria by the French and a repatriation of the 400,000 Algerian workers in the metropolis, would result in chaos, a catastrophic decline in living standards already below the minimum and a series of explosions. This was, of course, the "threat and menace of independence" with which de Gaulle confronted the black populations of sub-Sahara France during his referendum campaign. I will go further; an FLN-won "independence" for Algeria would be a political disaster for all of us—an authoritarian, Nasser-like regime living on blood baths whose first foreign gesture would be an effort, with Nasser's aid, to crush Tunisia.

For—and it is time we recognized this—"colonialism" and the struggles of colonial peoples are infinitely more complex that they were in, say, the time most of us were nourished on the milk of anti-imperialism. That colonialism is 75 per cent dead; the classical anti-imperialist struggles of the backward peoples (led—do you remember—by the small, but highly conscious proletariat and its revolutionary party) never existed and never will! It is impossible to discuss this *here* (we cannot neglect this forever, however). At least we can agree that national movements such as in Algeria are not at all what we had expected; leadership, aims and means—all are different and—irony of ironies—do not necessarily lead to "independence."

Thus far Germaine Tillion stays on solid ground. But Algeria cries out for a political solution and she talks of "...*a precise and coherent develop-*

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ment plan, [which] would result, not in a secession of Algeria from France, but, on the contrary, in a consolidation of the unity of the two economies and therefore of the two political systems." True, she prefaces this by a mention of "political concessions" (unspecified), but this runs counter to her own thesis. Whether or not the Algerian people will opt for full independence is no one's concern but their own; no matter how strongly we may consider such an option to be in error, an end to the tragedy of Algeria is inconceivable without recognition of this right and without provision of the means to exercise it. For all her insight, Mlle. Tillion cannot come to this point.

That independence had best come in transitional stages—local autonomy to regional autonomy to internal autonomy to federation etc.—is an acceptable notion. The Algerian people must have time to develop their institutions and their parties. I can even go along with those who see in de Gaulle's referendum-consultation of the Algerian masses at least the beginnings of politics, electoral activity etc. But even from the fascinating Mlle. Tillion I must insist upon this recognition of a people's right to decide for itself. STANLEY PLASTRIK

The "First Professional Revolutionary"

THE REVOLUTIONARY THEORIES OF LOUIS AUGUSTE BLANQUI, by Allan B. Spitzer. Columbia Univ. Press, 1957, 208 pp. $3.75.

This is a painstaking, if somewhat pedestrian, study of the theories of the "first professional revolutionary" of Europe. Blanqui spent forty of his seventy-six years in the prisons of all the regimes which governed France betwee 1830 and 1881, and during these years of enforced idleness he read widely and wrote profusely. Much of this material has been lost but parts of it are available in twenty volumes of unpublished manuscript at the Paris Bibliothèque Nationale.

Blanqui was sometimes a shrewd historical observer, as when he talked of the strange "eclecticism of the guillotine" during the last stage of Jacobin terror, but he was not an original thinker. Disciple of eighteenth century Enlightenment and of *Babouvisme,* his doctrine consisted in an amalgam of messianic belief in The Revolution, confidence that small revolutionary minorities could sieze power and in due course "educate the masses," strong doses of French nationalism and a romantic trust in "the people." Blanqui's importance in the history of the socialist movement resides not in his ideas but in his conspiratorial actions. His theory of permanent revolutionary action influenced several generations of the French Left and was not without influence on Lenin and his co-thinkers. Blanqui attempted to set up a revolutionary dictatorship of the enlightened which by controlling the political machinery would gradually educate the masses and change the economic institutions of a still largely agricultural France. This makes it understandable why he should have fascinated Lenin. Like Lenin, he attempted to "force history," to transcend objective conditions, by an effort of the revolutionary will.

L. C.

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Both have been done, and sometimes the executive who decreed that this subversive lapse on the part of a writer rendered him unfit to work was himself a former member.

In this sense, no decision of the Attorney General, or of any American court, can possibly eradicate the grave harm that has been done in violation of due process. And this does not merely apply to the defunct organizations which have been listed. It is a factor in the life of anyone who has ever belonged to a group designated by the Attorney General. Actually, the only thing which can really change this situation would be a massive public revulsion against the principle of the List itself, and a general refusal on the part of the American people to pay any attention to it. Until that happens, if it ever does, the focus of the civil liberties battle will be on the formal, legal questions involved.

This, of course, is not to minimize the signficance of the ISL victory. Here was a small organization discouragingly pitted against the immense power of the Government's agencies. With the magnificent aid of the Workers Defense League, and Joseph Rauh, the WDL attorney in the case, it was able to challenge the Attorney General. But even with Rauh's generous contribution and the WDL's aid, there was still a considerable financial burden. And throughout, there was the continuing and unrelenting pressure of the Government itself. In the course of this struggle, Max Shachtman, National Chairman of the ISL, won a victory in a significant passport case which upheld the "natural right" to travel. Now, with the formal delisting a further victory has been won.

And yet, one cannot help skeptical speculation about the motives of the Justice Department (and how ironic the name sounds in this context) in this case. Proof, of course, the Attorney General did not have; but that was as true ten years ago as it was ten weeks ago; in fact, the Atterney General had difficulty finding experts to testify against the ISL: one admitted he had never heard of the ISL, another (James Burnham!) admitted he was ready to lie for the "cause." Why then, did the Attorney General hand down his decision?

One theory that comes to mind immediately is that the Attorney General feared a clear-cut court test of the List. His case against the ISL was shredded by Rauh's brilliance; he would appear in court, not as the denouncer of a Communist organization which had been listed arbitrarily, but as the persecutor of a small, anti-Communist and democratic socialist organization; and he would face a challenge, not simply to the listing of the ISL, but to the constitutionality of the List itself. It is not unlikely that he reluctantly decided to let one group go in the hope of keeping the List itself intact.

So long as the List remains, the atmosphere, at least, of witch-hunt remains. There is the old, and somewhat abstract, argument that if the Government takes this or that step, then it will be driven logically to an extreme. Usually it doesn't work; here, it did. For once having adopted a principle of anonymous and irrefutable accusation which was taken as proof of guilt, once having introduced this conception into a society which was moving toward the right, the Attorney General had created a malig-

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nant growth. It spread and spread with rigorous consistency, from Government to industry, from industry to the public as a whole. It became the chief weapon of every McCarthyite and anti-libertarian in the country, the rigorously insane statute of a Kafka-like world.

Now the hysteria has passed and these "extremes" have become institutions. The outcome of the ISL fight was not to destroy the institution. Rather it was to provide an utterly convincing demonstration of its reactionary character. For this, for its perseverance in long and arduous years of struggle (examinations upon examinations upon examinations), the ISL deserves the gratitude, not only of socialists, but of every democrat and civil libertarian. The WDL (112 E. 19th St., New York) should not simply receive congratulations. It should be given money to continue its splendid work. And Joseph Rauh, whose series of legal victories is making him one of the most effective champions of civil liberties in the United States, deserves praise, of course, but, better yet, another chance to bring the whole constitutional question out into the open.

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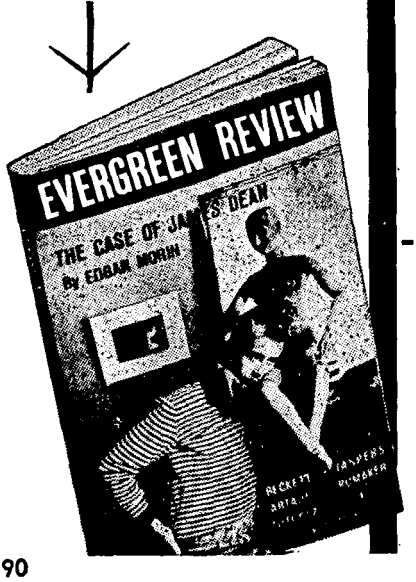

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DAYS IN KABYLIE

In 1956 the author was recalled to service in the French army, assigned to Algeria from June to December. Below we print a very small excerpt from his diary of "Days in Kabylie" [The Mountain Region of Algeria], originally published in the periodical Temps Modernes.

G. M. Mattei

The events which follow took place between the months of June and December, 1956. The battalion to which I belonged was principally composed of young draftees, led by regular army officers and non-commissioned officers who had all had a year in North Africa. My company had at the time suffered the most, three dead and some twenty wounded. Cruel ambushes had prepared the ground for that psychology of hate which I saw develop in the course of those six months.

When my group arrived, there existed a wide gap between us and those young soldiers whom fear, prejudice, a desire for vengeance and the legend of the "tough soldier," all encouraged by Captain B., had changed into specialists at war. We had not yet realized into what a melting pot of ideas we had been thrown. Those twenty-year old French boys had settled themselves into war: work details, missions, searches, "gestapism," building fortifications, getting drunk, and medals for the most deserving. We were stop-gaps, and suspect. The men called back to active duty were not well liked in North Africa. A bad reputation had preceded us, and all the officers remembered the events of May, 1956, when hundreds of youths had withstood a regular siege by the riot-police, the C.R.S., in a barracks in the North of France. The men "recalled" were, for them, sad sacks, cowards, screwballs. Another mistake of the government which used them. Above all, the "recalled" soldier was the unwelcome influence, capable of making those impressionable youths, whom their officers had well in hand, come out of their torpor. They must uphold the respect for the hierarchy, encourage the competition for promotions (a "chief corporal" received 80,000 francs a month, a corporal 18,000 francs, a private 10,850 francs, after their original service time of 18 months.)

It was some time [in August] that I went as a volunteer on a local operation, in a village near our post.

I won't go into the way the village was searched, how the women, children and old people were pushed with shouts and insults towards the "djemma."

I was assigned to the collection of cards of identity. One of my comrades kept the men of the village in order, while farther on another fellow-soldier tried in vain to keep the women quiet. I felt over dirty bodies, opened wallets and discovered their little secrets: letters from their children, certificates of good behaviour, awards of

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medals. I counted out the sums of money, since a large sum of money is suspicious. Old men whose pride had been wounded said to me with irony, "Do you think I've got any money? If I had some money I'd go back to Marseille to work at the Saint-Louis sugar. Don't you know that?"

I was disgusted with myself. There I was, with the pockets of my combat uniform full of the papers of all the men in the village. I was a cop!

That same day I also saw a scene which made me laugh in spite of myself, because it made a proud non-com lose a lot of his dignity. While he was shouting at a woman to be quiet, she took one of her breasts from the infant she was nursing, and pressed it so that a burst of warm milk hit our humiliated non-com straight in the face.

I was put in charge of a Kabyle who had been picked out as a suspect in this village, a native of the village of T., against which we were at that time preparing an operation, because it habitually harbored one of the sections of Ouamrame. We already had quite a bit of information on it and it was practically impossible to get more; anyone we questioned could tell us no more than we knew already. The man was walking beside me. He was scared, he said how strange life was, he could have easily taken another road and not have been picked up, but he wanted to sell his figs. He had a wife and four children, and had been a prisoner of the Germans; he talked to me about the "Liberation." I knew he had been chosen, he would be "questioned" that night. So I told him, haltingly, with a guilty conscience, that we were the fall guys, he and I, that he must think about himself, his wife, and his children who were waiting for him. Finally the absurdity of the situation (he was going to be tortured to no purpose, just to hear the same thing once more) made me say to him softly, "Listen, in a little while the chief is going to question you; we already know all about the village of T."...

I was ashamed, but I wanted at least this one to get away, since I could warn him...It's not worth it, playing the hero! Suffering and dying...I was getting solft, I tried to explain to him that it was all set up, that we were both prisoners, and that the only really important thing for him was to see that his four kids could eat, and tomorrow...But not even tomorrow! I had told him to talk!

Mokram was tortured for 8 days.

One evening when I was substituting for someone on duty, I went into the torture room. I saw a shadow crumpled into an old easy chair, moaning with a rope around his neck, and his wrists tied. I had talked to that man, he had talked to me. I was afraid he might recognize my voice. To him, I was also a torturer. I left in silence....

October 1

Schools open today. Somewhere down at the foot of the Djurjura, near the village of A.M., the Kabyle children are called to school by the sound of machine guns:

At 8 o'clock, the children aren't there yet.

At quarter past 8, there's a burst of machine gun fire over the huts. The children come sadly, they don't understand.

You can only know hate without understanding it. If the children are late, the sentry will shoot on the roof tiles...

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Miscellany

The Pattern of Sociological Theory

Henri Rabassieve

A CURIOUS PAPER was recently found in the archives of the University of Kenya. Judging from the typescript characteristics, it was written in the third quarter of the 20th century, and is apparently a lecture read to an academic audience. Its author, certainly an observant traveler, may have been a faculty member since forgotten—unjustly so, as will presently appear. For this interesting document, which hereafter is published in full, already contains the basic ideas which we now have accepted as the valid theory of Wameriku society.

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"MANY a traveler has wondered why the Wameriku habitually sacrifice their lives to their curious ideas on traffic and mobility. As is well known, thousands yearly suffer death on the roads for no other reason than an apparent compulsion to get speedily from one place to another, and a vast machinery has been developed to make this possible. Why are they so indifferent to life and property when on the the other hand their laws tell them to avoid these accidents? I find it impossible to reconcile these laws with theories, held by some of my eminent colleagues, that self-immolation by speeding is some kind of religious rite with the Wameriku, or that motion in general is their religion. While not disregarding the possibility, I should like to suggest a more realistic theory which takes into account economic and social motives hitherto neglected.

"I would even go so far as to maintain that those deaths are unwanted and purely accidental, not deliberate as has been assumed. They are *an* incidental expense and must strike us civilized people as another indication of the callous cynicism which characterizes the Wameriku ruling class. For frankly—who benefits from the arrangements which cause these accidents?

"The traveler who moves around in this country, as its natives are wont to do, must soon become aware that its population is divided into two groups of different sizes. One has the very distinctive characteristic of supplying means of transportation, servicing same, waylaying the other group on the road with various enticements to eat, to sleep and to enjoy themselves in the manner of people who move around. The other is an unhappy agglomeration of people at large who are forced to travel, to buy or to use means of transportation and to pay the first group for the servicing of their vehicles and bodies while on the road. They submit to all kinds of indignities, such as paying tolls, eating whatever they are offered, sleeping in different beds every night; they accept poor service for considerable money, obey various laws affecting the ways and speeds they may use while traveling, and they agree to unspeakable crowding in the favored circuits at prescribed seasons, where they meet people they detest, where they helplessly have to listen to especially designed instruments dinning so-called folk airs into their ears while they are trying to relax (we shall presently expand on the question why they accept these disturbances and even pretend to like them) —briefly, they suffer a condition of existence which the stranger has great difficulty in understanding but which will become very transparent as soon as we consider the condition of the country.

"Consider, for instance, the early history of these states. Nothing, two hundred years ago, pointed to any need or necessity which might urge the peoples of these colonies to unite and to form one country. There even is ample evidence to the contrary, namely that most people at the beginning favored a more loosely constituted confederation, and again and again regionalistic and even secessionist tendences have sought and found political expression. As history shows, these insurrections of common sense and egalitarianism always were ruthlessly suppressed, and behind the forces and ideologies that were making for unification we always find, if we only look closely enough, those interests which were at all times ready to exploit mobility. They shrewdly foresaw

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that unification of the continent would give occasion to the building of many roads and would create opportunities for many people to visit states which otherwise they might disdain as foreign countries. The Civil War gave considerable impetus to this movement toward traveling from one place to the other and an attendant ideology was created to condition people so that they would believe there was special happiness in following such slogans as "Go West, young man." The great myth of Manifest Destiny and of the individual pursuit of happiness, the social slogan of homesteading, staking out claims, hewing a path into the wilderness, the great national legend of the pathfinder and later of the pioneering inventors of motor vehicles—all this was viciously designed to condition people for the special kind of exploitation prevalent in this country.

"Now eventually they have come to a point where they not only pretend to enjoy mobility but even see a virtue in this exercise. They take a perverse pride in their individual ability to break up their homes or just to travel all the forty-eight states. Moving hither and thither has become a patriotic duty or at least the source of patriotic satisfaction, and as a reflection in the sphere of ideology, shrewdly engineered by the pirates of the road, people moreover see similar virtues in other kinds of mobility, such as climbing the social ladder. The point is that nothing must ever stay where it is, and hence people must believe that it is God's will if they submit to the commands of their exploiters.

"IT MAY BE ARGUED, as in fact it has been, that there are other differentiations and even other forms of exploitation among the Wameriku. However, these appearances only tend to obscure the fundamental and essential relationship which exists between those who are moving and those who profit by their mobility. The very fact that no social scientist in that country has ever studied this curious relationship, not to speak of denouncing it or building a system on it, this very ignoring, I say, of such a most obvious and striking fact clearly in the view of all must make us highly suspicious. Wameriku are not even allowed to discuss the most important social fact of their life, and their sociologists look away, learnedly telling their students of all kinds of groups, associations, antagonisms and forces of conflict except the one which nearly everybody must have remarked upon and even grumbled about many a time. All the other groupings and conflicts are built up deliberately to becloud the basic issue and to deflect attention from it.

"Congressmen who are sent to Washington from the provinces for the sole purpose of getting roads built in their constituencies, pretend to fight for so-called issues which are entirely irrelevant to the basic social problem of this country. Trade unions pretend to fight the bosses and corporations while they are in fact allying themselves with these employers for the purpose of either extracting more money from the road users or fighting off the monopolists of the road. It is no accident but has been very little noticed that the change from the Democratic and New Deal governments to a Republican administration had been preceded by an important shift of power in the Teamsters' Union. As will be well remembered, President Roosevelt started his campaign in 1944 with a speech under the sponsorship and chairmanship of the then president of the teamsters, Dan Tobin. The passage of power from the hands of Tobin into those of David Beck and later J. Hoffa corresponds to the downfall of the New Deal insurgents and the reconquest of power by the gangsters of the road and elsewhere. The Republican land grab and the pilfering of wares by the dockers are all of one cloth and it is not accidental of course that so many directors of an automobile corporation were members of the Eisenhower administration.

"But so sorry is the state of that unhappy country, that both major parties alike are dedicated to the interests of the highwaymen. Far from trying to wrest power from the monopolists, the Democrats launched a vast program of road expansion. And since at that time, during the Great Depression, not many people could afford to use all these roads, the New Deal forced them by making them government officials or

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drafting them into the Army. It certainly speaks volumes that notoriously frequent and pointless inspection tours of Congressmen, government officials and high brass are always humorously referred to as "junkets" but never frowned upon seriously. Finally, a war was started, involving large-scale movements of troops for the sole benefit of the pirates of the road.

"The press of course neither dares to tell its readers why these trips are necessary. Nor do political scientists care to train the light of research on these abuses, not to speak of attempting a serious theory of their meaning in terms of the economic structure of their country. If they did, they certainly would lose their jobs. In this connection, gentlemen, may I venture the methodological remark that the very absence of any such theory should make us suspicious and, in fact, may militate in favor of its acceptance by serious students?

"IT IS IMPOSSIBLE in the course of a brief report to describe all the ramifications of the basic law by which the road monopolists extort a tribute from the rest of the population. They are, however, highly interesting, and any even superficial perusal of other travel reports on the life and customs of this strange continent will yield a crop of examples, not only of the cruelty of this exploitation but also of the utter uselessness and futility in sending goods and people from one part of the country to the other. It is here suggested that life in these parts of the world should be studied under the aspect of this basic pattern; then we will much better understand where power really resides and how this country is run and how its people function economically, socially, politically, ideologically and even religiously.

"I will add only one remark as a warning to the serious student. He will not find any Wameriku ready to admit the truth about the country. He will find no politician and no scientist ready to abandon the special axe which each of them has to grind. He will run into vicious attempts to frustrate any serious inquiry and he may find deliberate misconstructions of the social edifice by the various interested parties and their subservient ideologists. He should not be disturbed by any of these abnegations. Once the truth has been discovered by an objective and disinterested traveler, almost inadvertently, it can no longer be hidden and will sooner or later be recognized as the underlying cause which helps us understand the strange behavior of the Wameriku in their home as well as in foreign affairs."

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As the unknown speaker seemed to fear, the power of the interests which he denounced at that time was so vast, and indeed extended to the far-off shores of Kenya, that his paper—if he ever managed to pilot it through the censorship of his Board—fell a victim to the conspiracy of silence for more than a hundred years. On the other hand, his prediction also came true that finally the hard labor and courage of devoted scientists caught up with the facts. Unfortunately, communication with the land of the Wameriku now has become so difficult—a price we gladly pay for our liberation from the exploiters of the seaways—that at this point we cannot inform our readers on the progress of further research which meanwhile may have produced particulars about the author of this interesting paper or his unhappy suppression by the authorities.

A Program Modestly Proposed

William F. Heald

MANY OF US have been quite concerned about the financial status of college teachers, and the fact that non-academic commissions have been formed to investigate conditions and that citizens committees have been busily examining data with the apparent intention of reaching a conclusion on the subject is welcome evidence that the nation as a whole is beginning to share our concern.

It is time, I think, that we give serious consideration to a plan that is completely in keeping with our institutions and the spirit of our traditions. I have formulated a program which deserves the support of all fair minded, pa-

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triotic citizen. Briefly, it is this: each teacher should be encouraged to sell ten per cent of his class time to advertisers.

This plan would enable the average college teacher to insert a one minute commercial message after opening the class, proceed with the regular work for twenty minutes or so before breaking in with a three minute commercial, and then to continue until the bell is about to ring when he can offer another one minute reminder before giving the next assignment. Sponsors should be willing to pay substantial amounts to the teacher for these excellent advertising spots, and this augmentation should prove sufficient to raise the teacher's income.

There is no need to belabor the self-evident, but perhaps the reader will pardon my pointing out some of the advantages of the plan.

First, it will raise incomes equitably, Those who teach the required lower division courses are invariably the poorest paid of all faculty members, but the fact that they meet with a larger number of students than the senior faculty will make their services more valuable to prospective sponsors. Even those who teach rather small groups, however, should have little difficulty in finding a sponsor. After all, they can provide a captive audience which might be smaller than the local radio, television, or newspaper audience, but which is more certainly available at regular intervals.

Second, it will improve instruction. In a competitive free-enterprise system like ours success is gauged by income, and the more intelligently ambitious young people graduate to well paid jobs or professions. An increase in income, then, will attract to teaching capable young people who now do not even consider teaching as a goal. Furthermore, classroom efficiency will lead to increased sponsor interest. Since the teacher whose students are alert and attentive will naturally sell better than one whose students doze or day-dream through the class period, the sponsor will no doubt be anxious to gain the good teacher's services by offering him more money. This, in turn, will encourage more teachers to improve their classroom technique.

And too, since the teacher will be required to make the commercial message appealing, we may expect to see even the average teacher become more imaginative and therefore more stimulating in his lectures. The really good instructor, for instance, might avail himself of opportunities to insert plugs throughout the day's lesson. The humanist might pause dramatically during the discussion of the battle over Patroclus' body to remark wittily that the combatants would surely have welcomed an opportunity to drop in at the Off-Campus Tavern for a cool, refreshing glass of beer after the battle. The botanist might mention during a discussion of the wild flowers of Ohio that the beauty of nature can rarely be improved, but that Bette's Beauty Parlor & Salon will do the near impossible for co-eds at reduced rates.

Is it not reasonable to expect that the teacher who examines his subject for chances to relate it to his sponsor's product will also be more likely to find ways to relate it to the experience of living—to make it more functional, dynamic?

Third, my program will almost automatically do away with the prevalent anti-business bias of many college teachers. Once members of this group become integral parts of our society, sharing in the spirit of our way of life instead of hanging around the periphery as parasitic and skeptical bystanders, they will strive to succeed in the accepted way, forgetting their jealous objections to the free-enterprise system. And while it is possibly true that some of the present faculty members will be unable to change their opinions, we need not worry about them because the law of the market place will see to it that they are shortly replaced by younger, more ambitious, more loyal instructors.

Fourth and last (but far from least), my program will encourage sponsoring merchants and industrialists, who are the heart, soul, and backbone of our culture, to take an active interest in what goes on in the classroom. We can all rest more comfortably in the assurance that under their wary eyes no fuzzy-minded, subversive ideas will creep into the classroom.

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LETTERS

Pan-Africa

Editors:

In the last issue of DISSENT you carry a review of Nkrumah's *Ghana* by M. K. Kamath. The author of this review implies that Nkrumah alone freed Ghana and created the "Secret Circle" and the Convention People's Party. The author says that: "Nehru had a Gandhi to fall back upon as intellectual and spiritual guide...Nkrumah apparently did not."

This is a wrong slant on West Africa and her present-day leaders. Of course, today people know more about Asia than about Africa. This is one of the blind spots of the Western world. Behind this attitude is the assumption that Asian civilization is ahead of African culture or civilization. From a naive point of view, this is true. But from an historical point of view it is all wrong. Those nations in Asia and Africa today who are making the fastest and most stable progress are those whose past has been shattered, whose outlook is uncloudily turned toward the future.

Back of the *whole* movement of black nationalist liberation in West Africa is the Pan-African movement which is headed by George Padmore. In his book, *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*, Padmore gives a detailed history of the movement of black nationalism—a movement which is older than Communism! If Gandhi laid the foundations for Indian freedom, then Padmore, the mentor of the leaders of West Africa, is now, today, laying the same foundations for West African freedom. If Gandhi is better known than Padmore, it is because of Western racial prejudice. (I might add that I wrote the introduction to Padmore's *Pan-Africanism or Communism?*). It is often overlooked that the African has been in intimate touch with the Western world much longer than the Asian and that the African is really more politically advanced.

This might sound as though I'm grinding a racial axe, but he who cares to look into this matter will see that I'm merely stating facts. The white West has been long sold upon the idea that the ancient traditions of Asia spell a higher culture and a greater capacity for political development. I feel that the contrary is really true. The West, in its brutal attack upon the fragile tribal culture of Africa, freed the African psychologically to build stable and modern states. Having been hit hard by the white West, the African has less of the past in his heart than the Asian. I believe that the immediate future progress of West Africa will bear me out in this. I'm not seeking to devalue the great accomplishments of Nkrumah, but it ought to be known that behind Nkrumah is a "black international," a well-knit, intelligent, public organization which is holding its Sixth World Conference this year in Accra.

RICHARD WRIGHT

The Question of Kitsch

Editors:

In your Winter [1958] issue, two old friends, Harold Rosenberg and Paul Goodman, writing independently, have some unkind things to say about the quality of my taste and mind. Now I don't say that it would be impossible to find something critical to say on this topic, but I do feel that my old friends write in a rather smug and sectarian spirit, and, therefore, that they have quite failed to discover my real weaknesses. I shan't help them there—let them do their own work—but may I at least demonstrate their incompetence?

Rosenberg's strictures are an aside in a manifesto written in his most epigrammatic and gnomic style—if he could just once *develope* a point, he'd become a serious writer. "When Macdonald speaks against kitsch," he writes, "he seems to be speaking from the point of view of art; when he speaks about art it is plain his ideas are kitsch." It is so plain that Roesnberg feels no need to try to demonstrate or even illustrate this sweeping charge. I won't try to rebut it—the evidence is in print, after all—but I would like to show the specific grounds for it. They appear in Rosenberg's statement that "modern art revolts him [me]." Now modern art does *not* revolt me; I admire and enjoy the work of Gris, Braque, Modigliani, Picasso, Klee, Matisse, etc., which is what most people would call "modern art." But Rosenberg isn't most

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people, he's a member of a very exclusive little club, and by the term he means simply (or merely) the New York School, or abstract expressionism or action painting or drip 'n dribble (the avant garde equivalent of rock 'n roll) —anyway the kind of painting Rosenberg and I have had more than one argument about. (He must mean this because (a) the only place I've written about modern art was in my *New Yorker* profile of Alfred Barr and (b) the only criticism hostile to any phase of modern art was that directed against abstract expressionism.) To equate this one school with "modern art" and, on the basis of this to call me "Philistine" (When you say that, pardner—smile!), this seems to me a mite sectarian.

I CAN'T HERE, or at least won't here, go into Rosenberg's general thesis, insofar as I understand it, except to say that I agree there is perhaps too much written these days about mass culture—it's become almost as much of an intellectual fad as action painting—and don't agree that Lowenthal was wrong when he wrote, "The counterconcept to popular culture is art." When Rosenberg says that kitsch's counterconcept, its antagonist is not art but "reality," I don't know what he is talking about. Of course, "reality," whatever *that* means, is different from kitsch (does that make it a "counterconcept"?), but so is it different from art (or high culture). The serious battle today, for all who love literature and art and philosophy and the other forms of the culture we have inherited from past ages, is the battle against the cheapening and debasing of high culture by the lords (and consumers) of kitsch. Agreed that the best way to fight it is for each artist, writer, etc., to do his own work and let the masses have their kitsch (or does Rosenberg still have a soft spot in his Marxistical heart for the masses? it's not clear) —agreed this, I think that critics can profitably, from the standpoint of culture, analyze and expose the corrupting effect of mass culture. It's all those sociologists and Marxologues that have come stampeding into the field that I find superfluous—precisely the ones that Rosenberg, in his sophisticated obscurantism, picks out as the only respectable practitioners: "To study kitsch as propaganda is legitimate," pontificates Harold XII, and then makes the mistake (which, to be fair to him, is the kind of mistake he rarely does make) of being specific: "e.g., the Berelson-Salter piece in *Mass Culture*." What nonsense! This particular piece in the *Mass Culture* anthology, as I pointed out in my review of the book in *Encounter* was an extreme example of what I call the Academic-Cautious approach to kitsch. After a laborious survey of "198 short stories published in 8 of the country's most widely read magazines in 1937 and 1943," replete with statistical tables and other instruments of pedantic torture, the authors triumphantly conclude: "On almost every index—frequency, role, delineation, status, goals—the Americans received better treatment, both qualitatively and quantitatively, than the minority and foreign groups." The special virtue of such articles, quoth Dr. Rosenberg, is that their "aim is not knowledge alone but action, to dissolve the 'old crap' [Engels] by means of a new reality." Well, the reality is not new (unless Dr. R. expected the American heroes of magazine fiction to receive *worse* treatment than minority and foreign groups), the increment of knowledge is minimal, and the line of action has been clear for several generations without any help from Drs. Berelson and Salter (who would be horrified at the very idea). Trouble with Rosenberg as a thinker is he's so damnably abstract. He judges on general, pseudo-philosophical grounds—whence his absurd reaction to the Berelson-Salter article—instead of on those specific grounds where exists all truth.

LIKEWISE WITH PAUL'S review of my book —I do like using first names, so *friendly*. He was more charitable than Harold, but also more condescending. It seems I'm outgoing, decent, honest, independent, unspiteful, and brave; in short, I have all the Boy Scout virtues. Moreover, and in addition, I'm "our best journalist." But this turns out to be a rather mild compliment. For what *is* a journalist? Alas, an ignorant and superficial fellow, a kibitzer (rather than "a man determined to a goal of action or truth"), a mouther of current slogans, a parasite on

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the day's headlines "who seems to have no experience of the passion of the intellect." In short, a very different sort of chap from Paul, the one-man academy. (His tone is that of a wise old professor chiding a clever but "unsound" young pupil.) My lack of cultural background is very distressing to Paul, but the three concrete instances he gives seem not such at all: the Greeks *did* contemn the State, using "State" in the Hegelian sense I did in "The Responsibility of Peoples" (the Persians were closer to Hegel's idea of the State); whether Marxism has a richer intellectual tradition than pacifism is, of course, a matter of opinion and not, as Paul pretends, of knowledge, and I think I have a better right to an opinion because I was for years actively engaged in both these camps and Paul wasn't (in fact, it might be hard for the outsider to determine by just looking at our careers which of us has been The Man Determined To A Goal Of Action And Truth and which has been the kibitzer); Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, my dear Paul, were the watchwords of the French Revolution (1789-1794) and so expressive of bourgeois liberalism. What the devil did they use to teach at Townsend Harris and City College?

Paul accuses me of thinking with my typewriter (which is true but what's wrong? thought has to start somewhere) and of having no memory: "Dwight once told me, but he will not remember, that he couldn't remember anything more than three months back—the period, I guess, for researching an assignment and thinking it up with one's typewriter." Well, I do remember, and I also remember, as Paul apparently doesn't, that we were talking about Freudian therapy and my point was that I would be a poor subject because I wasn't much interested in my own past and couldn't remember it very well. So it's not a question of memory in general but of one kind of memory; a writer who actually had to operate only on the basis of his current three-months stock of culture would in fact be the sort of breezy ignoramus Paul thinks I am.

But this kind of friendly exchange could go on forever, and in the case of Paul's review seemed indeed to do so. I've been trying to think, using my trusty Remington portable, why Paul feels so superior to and irritated with me, and I've decided it's because he is a very abstract-type thinker while I'm more on the concrete side; or, to ,put it another way, he is a wholesaler of ideas, while I'm a retailer. Paul goes in for big, basic philosophies of life, which he expounds in a confident way; he's way up there in the empyrean, and my own earth-bound little typewriter-ideas, always limited to some specific aspect of things, must seem intolerably trivial to him. He specializes in answers, while I go in more for questions.

Another difficulty between us is that Paul's temperament is that of the prophet —if Harold is pontifical, Paul is Messianic—while mine is that of the artist—or, to be more modest, the craftsman. I find it interesting that he describes me, in a casual aside, as "a very fine writer and craftsman." This is clearly of slight importance to him—and his own writings, so hasty and formless, so obviously dashed off in the heat and so little worked-over, demonstrate this—while good writing is for me a most important quality in a book. I often admire Paul's ideas, when they aren't too cosmic, but rarely his way of expressing them. I know that Paul thinks he is one of the major poets and novelists of our time because I remember, improbable as it may seem, sitting with him years ago in a restaurant off Astor Place (now what *was* the name? ah—Conti's!) and having him tell me so in dead seriousness. He also claimed he knew as a matter of scientific truth, not taste, which poems were good (his were) and which bad, and that he could demonstrate this knowledge in such a way as to compel agreement (the demonstration was a flop). Nonetheless—or possibly therefore—I think he is not much interested in the art or craft of writing, and that this is why he reacted to my book so negatively. Otherwise, I really can't explain it. After all, there were at least fifty pages of good writing there.

July 4, 1958 DWIGHT MACDONALD

HAROLD ROSENBERG *Replies*:

Despite my lack of talent for the "specific," I am happy to note that Macdonald (or his typewriter) celebrated July 4 by setting off firecrackers

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under Goodman who prophesied against him and under Rosenberg who pontificated. "An artist—or to be more modest, a craftsman" (Macdonald) has risen in defiance of one "very abstract-type thinker" (Goodman) and one "thinker (who) is ... so damnably abstract" (Rosenberg), both of whom had beset him in a "smug and sectarian spirit," though Macdonald does not explain what we were smug about or why it's sectarian to think him a bit ridiculous.

Against me Macdonald's complaint is that I made a charge without demonstrating or "even illustrating" its soundness. "When Macdonald speaks against kitsch," I had said, "he seems to be speaking from the point of view of art; when he speaks about art it is plain his ideas are kitsch." Very well, let's demonstrate it.

In his current letter Macdonald recommends that critics analyze mass culture "from the standpoint of culture"—presumably, this means, if it means anything, from the standpoint of art. The question is therefore: Can Macdonald speak from such a standpoint, or only *seem* to? To qualify, Macdonald denies that modern art revolts him. On the contrary, he asseverates, he admires "Gris, Braque, Modigliani, Picasso, Klee, Matisse, etc., which is what most people would call 'modern art'."

But this admiration of *old* modern art and of artists who are, with one exception, dead is the typical kitsch attitude. It is not kitsch to say, modern art stinks—that is forthright conservatism or ignorance. Kitsch, as the spurious Good Thing, the phony classic, ancient or contemporary, is never in opposition to what is accepted (and certainly Modern Art, even the best of what was done in it 40 years ago, *is* accepted). Kitsch reserves its hostility and contempt for "the extremists," "the very exclusive little club" to whom recognition of Modern Art in the past is not enough, in a word, for what is alive and in motion *now*. It is against the art that is not yet Modern Art "for most people" that our self-styled "artist," who doesn't know but maybe he's only a modest craftsman, swings his hatchet in the organs of the uninformed. *Time-Life, The New Yorker,* Hollywood are full of lovers of Gris, Braque, Picasso and Etc. (any artist that high up and that far back) who stand ready to defend Modern Art against "the avant garde equivalent of rock'n roll."

Is this a disagreement between Macdonald and me about painting? On the basis of his one article on the subject I should hardly have picked him out as an example (by the way, pard, I *was* smiling when I said "Philistine" but not because it was an odd idea).

LET US MOVE over to the art of writing. Macdonald objects to my "epigrammatic and gnomic style—if he [Rosenberg] could just once *develop* a point, he'd become a serious writer." (his italics)

By "develop" Macdonald means taking a single notion and stretching it out through arguments and illustrations until it can slip easily in and out of his mind while seeming to leave something there. If you don't do this he threatens not to understand you. I'd become a serious writer if I took steps to convince Macdonald and wrote in a manner that would accord with his reading and thinking habits.

Now I'd gladly be accommodating, though what good it would do to convince a man who has been convinced and unconvinced so often I don't know. Yet I'd do it, were it not for the fact—and this is something that Macdonald does not grasp about writing—that if you "develop a point" in the direction of simple comprehension you, *and your audience,* have to pay for that development in undevelopment all along the line. You put over a *point,* just that and nothing more, at the expense of the total texture of your thought.

Not to be aware of this is to be hopelessly enmeshed in kitsch—including the kitsch device that makes it possible to praise stylistic complexity in Henry James in order to score against Cozzens, who is not an issue of art, and at the same time to rant against *Finnegans Wake,* though not in public, since *Finnegan* is only an issue of art.

I have no intention of instructing Macdonald on style, at least not without pay; though that "our best journalist" (how cutely he snags Goodman's compliments; but, yes, Paul could be

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wrong) has much to learn is "demonstrated or at least illustrated" by the quality of his irony: "pontificates Harold XII," "his Marxistical heart," "*Dr.* Rosenberg." Sticking to the matter of kitsch, the notion that to call writing "epigrammatic and gnomic" is to set it out of bounds is a typical mass-culture (consumers') notion of writing. Its criterion is the machined "communication"—and this and nothing else is in Macdonald's mind when he boasts that "good writing is for me a most important quality in a book" and condemns a superb stylist like Goodman for not "working over" his prose more. "When he speaks about art it is plain his ideas are kitsch." What else—in their appeal to the crowd against suggestion, overtone, allusion difficulty, in short, against the tradition of epigrammatic statement as a form of the subjective, the immediate, the intuitive, the visionary, personified by Pascal, Nietzsche or René Char? But of course none of these people ever "developed a point" by the standard of *The New Yorker*.

ANOTHER COMPLAINT of Macdonald relates to my remarks in "Pop Culture" about the function of the current wave of studies of kitsch. He suggests that he might not have understood my "thesis" and I feel compelled to agree with him. At any rate, I see no need to discuss the Berelson-Salter article which I mentioned as an example of an approach to kitsch as propaganda. It's generous of Macdonald to tip me off about what's boring in "laborious surveys... replete with statistical tables" (oh, his iron-clad word combinations!); apparently, "our best journalist" never misses anything if it's obvious enough. But his picking on those poor fellows doesn't help in getting back at me. I didn't say their article was good, or daring, or correct in its conclusion, or loaded with novelties. I said that analysis which exposed the propaganda in popular works served a useful social purpose, while writings "from the standpoint of culture" (a gem) that drew the interest of the reader to profundities hidden in crummy art did not. In other words, with the former the "aim is not knowledge alone but action"; for example, the protest of minorities which has resulted in marked changes ("new reality" to you, M) in their movie status. Is there something gnomic about this?

To wind up, Macdonald genially declares that "Trouble with Rosenberg as a thinker is he's so damnably abstract [Goodman too]. He judges on general, pseudo-philosophical grounds instead of on those specific grounds where exists all truth."

Some "trouble"—one thinks in ideas! I suppose one can "judge" things "on specific grounds" by smelling them. But who but Macdonald would tell you "where exists all truth"?

The difference between Macdonald's reaction to my writing and mine to his is that he wonders wnether he understands what I say, while I wonder whether he understands what he says. Frankly, I am unable to conceive *abstractly* what Macdonald thinks thinking is. I have therefore been forced to fall back to "the concrete side," as Macdonald calls it, where the following fable occurred to me:

Imagine a creature whose habitat is, exclusively, the edges of roofs. A further peculiarity is that it secretes a fluid that slowly eats away the substance under its body... The career of Macdonald has consisted in attaching himself to the perimeter of one idea or attitude after another. As these softened under him he fell through and had to go looking for a new nesting place. There is nothing to prevent one from regarding this process as a lifetime of search and its victim as blessed with "an open mind."

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